

Old Sleuth Library

JACK GAMEWAY; OR, A WESTERN BOY IN NEW YORK.
By OLD SLEUTH.

A SERIES OF THE MOST THRILLING DETECTIVE STORIES EVER PUBLISHED.

No. 52.

SINGLE
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Nos. 17 to 27 VANDEWATER STREET, NEW YORK.

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CHAPTER I.

"WELL, officer, what is the charge against this stalwart-looking youth?"

The speaker was a judge in one of the police courts, and his words were addressed to a policeman, who had just presented a prisoner.

The officer smiled good-naturedly, and actually looked admiringly at the sturdy frame of his youthful prisoner, as he said:

"I found this young man, your honor, knocking some big fellows around as though he were in a barn threshing wheat!"

The judge glanced mildly at the youth, and asked:

"What have you to say, my young friend, to the charge?"

Before recording the young man's answer we will briefly describe his extraordinary appearance.

He appeared to be about nineteen or twenty, a little above the average height; possessed a clear blue eye, finely cut features, a rosy complexion, and long black hair which trailed unkempt upon his broad shoulders. He was a fine, frank-looking fellow, and did not appear like one who was at home in a police court.

His dress was peculiar for a young man in the city. There was no "dude" in his make-up, as he was arrayed in a plain gray homespun suit, and thick shoes which were covered with dried yellow mud. In his hand he carried a regular felt sombrero, and, upon entering the court, he had placed upon one of the benches a stout staff, over which had been hung a blood-red handkerchief, which evidently contained his change of clothing, and served as his trunk.

"What is your name, young man?" demanded the judge.

"Jack Gamework,"

"You are a stranger in the city?"

"Yes, sir."

He had spoken in a clear, firm voice, and did not appear to be at all nervous or discomposed at the novelty of his position.

"Where are you from?"

"The West, sir."

"What part?"

"I came last from New Mexico. I was born in Iowa."

"What brought you to New York?"

"Business."

"Oh, you are a drover?"

"No, sir; I've come on here to settle, and I've come to stay. I've taken a notion I'd like to learn business, and that's why I've come to New York."

"You were never in the city before?"

"No, sir."

"When did you arrive?"

"This morning."

The judge glanced over the youth's form, and asked:

"By what train did you come?"

The youth lifted one of his mud-stained feet, and answered:

"By the foot express, sir."

"Eh?" exclaimed the judge, in an incredulous tone. "Do you mean to tell me that you have walked all the way from New Mexico?"

"I footed every inch of the ground, sir; you see I didn't have any money to buy a ticket, so I just walked in."

"And now what have you to say to the charge made against you by the officer? He says he caught you knocking some citizens around as though they were wooden men."

A quiet smile overspread the young man's face, as he answered, coolly:

"Well, I ain't got much to say, sir; the policeman has given it to you straight. I was kinder laying around fast, but I reckon I had a good excuse."

"Who were the men you were assaulting?"

"That's more than I can tell you, sir; but I'll give you the whole story."

"Very well; proceed, and tell me all about it."

"Well, sir, I arrived this morning in the city about daylight. I walked down along the track of the Hudson River Railroad, and that brought me out just by the depot, and I thought I'd go into a restaurant and get a cup of coffee and a bite to eat. Well, sir, I hadn't more than got seated at the table when there was a smooth-faced chap came and flopped right down at the same table. He was a nice talker, and I kinder took to him, and he just set in and pumped me pretty well, and he offered to take me to a man who, he said, was in want of a young man just about my inches, as a clerk. Well, your honor,

I was just glad to strike a job so quick, and I felt grateful. When we came out of the place we met two other men, and my new 'pard' said: 'Why, how lucky! Here's my friend now;' and he introduced me to the other fellows, and we walked off to go to the man's store."

"Ah, I see," remarked the judge, in a commenting tone.

"Well, yes, judge, considering I think myself pretty smart, I wonder I didn't see too, but I didn't, and I walked off with them easy enough, and we had gone several squares when a nice, pretty-looking girl met us. She looked at me and looked at the fellows with me, and then she walked straight up to me and asked:

"Young man, do you know these men?"

"A brave girl!" remarked the judge.

"Well, yes, judge, she was pretty spunky, as it turned out, for one of the fellows put his hand on her and gave her a shove, rough like, and she called to me:

"Look out for those men, young man; they're swindlers!"

"Well, sir, as soon as she said that, one of the fellows made for her, and raised his hand as though he were going to strike her, and I just stepped forward, and said:

"Hold on there, mister; don't attempt to hurt that gal!" and with that he kinder gave me a shove away, and then the others came up and grabbed hold of me, and a suspicion just trailed through my mind that all wasn't right, and I says:

"Now, see here, you fellows, just work your trotters, and get away from here; and then one of 'em raised his fist and gave me a crack, and then I just broke loose and 'sailed in,' and I just leveled 'em down a bit—gave 'em a little specimen of Western style, when the officer came up and caught me, while the other fellows just 'jumped the camp' lively."

"Did the young man offer you any resistance, officer?" asked the judge.

"No, sir; he came along with me as gentle as a babe."

"I believe your story, Jack," said the judge, "and you are discharged; and if you take my advice, you will just foot it back to New Mexico; but, if you do conclude to remain here, do

not make the acquaintance of strangers unless you are introduced by a friend whom you know."

"Thank you, sir; as I told you, I've come to New York to settle. I'll strike a permanent camp pretty soon, and I reckon I've learned a good lesson."

CHAPTER II.

THE judge gave the young man some additional advice and dismissed him. The officer followed the young man from the court-room and said:

"Look here, Jack, I'm going to give you some good advice; you just go to some clothing 'shebang' and rig out in city dress; it will save you considerable annoyance."

"I reckon these clothes are good enough for a spell yet," said Jack.

"They're good, to be sure; but New York is full of sharpers up to all kinds of tricks; they're just 'laying' for countrymen like you, and some way or another they'll manage to skin you out of every cent in your possession."

"I ain't got much."

"No matter; they will skin you out of all you have got."

"I'm much obliged to you, officer, but I reckon I can take care of the little 'dust' I carry. I worked hard for it, and if any one attempts to skin me out of it they'll get scalped, that's all!"

"All right, young man; I've done my duty in warning you. You may be very smart, but if you're smarter than these city skin chaps, you'll make your way in the world!"

"Thank ye again, officer. I tell you I've come to New York to settle, and I might as well learn the tricks of the hunters around here first as last. I'm a sort of Rocky Mountain grizzly, and if they can take me into any of their traps, why, I'm a fool of a bear, that's all. But I'm a watchful fox, I am; and a trap must be well covered if I stick my paw in it."

"You came pretty near being trapped early this morning."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes; it was a bad lot had you in tow."

"Well, officer, they hadn't sprung their trap yet. The warning came in advance, and mebbe it's more lucky for them than for me."

"All right, young man, I see you are a good, honest fellow, and it's a pity to see a square youth like you come on to the city to get spoiled; we've had young men enough around here already."

"Say, officer, you are a good man, hang it! and I kinder like you; but don't you worry about me; I'm too well salted and soaked in brine to spoil. My good mother didn't just whisper right principles and precepts in my ear—she just hammered 'em in till the last hour of her life, and there ain't no city temptations that are going to ever make me forget what that good woman taught me."

"So your father and mother are dead, eh?"

"Both dead. Father was a scout for Uncle Sam; and one day the Injuns got wood on him, and put the brave old scout's light out. I was just three years old then, so my mother told me, and the good woman started on the trail after father about three years ago."

"Have you any brothers or sisters?"

"I have no brothers nor sisters."

"And no relatives?"

"Well, I've heard mother say she reckoned she had a brother somewhere in New York; but, at the time she died, she hadn't heard from him in thirty years, so she concluded he was dead—but he may be knocking around yet, and some day I may strike his camp; can't say, but I reckon I can get along alone, I'm used to silent trails; yes, officer, I've been ten months on one 'streak' in the wilderness without seeing a human face—red or white—or hearing a sound save the screech of winds, the roar of waterfalls, or the howls of wild animals—I'm used to going it alone, you bet! and I won't get lost in New York."

The officer shook hands with Jack, and the two parted.

The young man had read of New York, and its great buildings and magnificent streets had filled his imagination for years.

The city was just getting astir as Jack wandered around, and the great throngs of people, the rush of vehicles, steaming of the elevated trains and jingle of the surface roads were all objects of great novelty and interest.

It was along about eleven o'clock when Jack

wandered down toward the end of Broadway near the Produce Exchange. He was moving along with eyes for everything, when his eyes fell upon a pocket-book lying upon the sidewalk.

"Halloo!" he exclaimed, and stooped, picked up the seemingly well-filled wallet, and, as he did so, a rough-looking man tapped the lad on the shoulder, and said:

"Halloo! What have you got there?"

"It looks like a well-filled pocket-book that somebody's lost."

Jack laid emphasis on the word "looks" as he made answer.

The man assumed a confidential look, and whispered:

"Let's go around the corner and open it."

"Guess there ain't no need to go around the corner."

"I want half of that, young man. I saw it just as you grabbed it."

"Did you?"

"Yes, I did."

"And you want half of it?"

"Yes."

"Well, let's see what's in it."

The man grabbed Jack's hand to stop him from opening the wallet.

"Hold on, stranger; don't close your claws on my wrist."

"Give me the pocket-book."

"Loose your paws, Johnny," said Jack.

The man made a grab for the pocket-book, when Jack suddenly let out his foot and gave him a trip that let him down on the sidewalk.

The man sprung to his feet, blue with rage, and made a dash at Jack, when the lad "broke loose," as he called it, and dealt the swindler a blow that knocked him reeling clear to the middle of the street before he fell, and when he did go down he was gazing at stars.

At the same moment a crowd had gathered, and Jack stood in their midst as cool as a cucumber.

"What is the matter, young fellow?" demanded one of the by-standers.

A pleasant and bland smile played over Jack's features, as he answered:

"Well, I reckon that fellow was coming the stuffed-pocket-book game over me; but I didn't put my paw into the trap; I just planted it on his jowl when he made to lay his hands on me."

As Jack spoke he held up the pocket-book, which one of the by-standers opened, and the little game—an old one—was exposed.

The swindler, meantime, had "made tracks," or, in other words, had disappeared.

The by-standers saw through the whole game, and when an officer, attracted by the crowd, arrived, the matter was explained to him, and he took possession of the pocket-book as a trophy for the police museum, while Jack strolled on, ready for trick number two.

Jack Gameway had been a reader of weekly story papers, where all the tricks of swindlers have been so often exposed for the benefit of people living in remote quarters, and by his reading had become well posted in all the schemes of city swindlers, so that he was prepared to "smell around before he fingered for the bait," as he expressed it.

Jack spent the day looking at the sights, and at night cast around for a lodging-place. If he had consulted his own taste he would have camped in one of the public parks; but he was not so green as not to know that such a performance was not permissible.

CHAPTER III.

JACK started on a trail to find a lodging-place. He had a few dollars, and he wanted to pass a few days seeing the sights, when he intended to start in and get a job.

During his walks through a certain portion of the city he had seen a sign, "Board and Lodgings," and he made for the place, and speedily "lit on to it," as he expressed it.

It may appear strange that the young man could find his way around the city so well; and we will answer that New York, owing to its situation between two rivers, and the straightness of the intersecting streets, is without doubt the only large city, excepting, probably, Philadelphia, where a stranger need not lose his way; and, besides, Jack was accustomed, owing to his prairie and mountain life, to "taking his bearings," and, as stated, he found the lodging-house without difficulty.

There are a great many houses of the same character in New York, where one can get

cheap board and lodging if he is willing to put up with the fare.

Jack knocked at the door, which was opened by a fat, red-faced woman.

"Can I get a room here for the night?" demanded the young man.

"You can get a bed, young feller; ain't got no rooms to let out."

"A bed is all I want."

"Well, come in!"

"I ain't just ready to come in yet. I only want to secure a place where I can camp when I'm ready to turn in."

"Don't secure no beds here; you'll have to come around when you're ready to turn in and take your chances."

"Oh, that's the go!"

"Yes."

"How much is it for a bed?"

"Ten cents."

"Good and clean?"

"Well, it's only ten cents, and you can take it or leave it."

"All right, I'll come round when I'm ready to turn in."

The door closed and Jack wandered away. He was a youth who had been used to roughing it, and the idea of turning in to such a place was not so great a hardship to him as it would have been to a lad more delicately reared.

Jack got on to Broadway, and was wandering along enjoying the novel scene, when his eyes fell upon a sight that made a deep impression upon his heart: sitting in a door-way fast asleep, her pale face shining white under the glare of light from a neighboring store window, was a little girl. The face was wan and weary, and the child was poorly clad.

Jack stood looking at the poor child, when a policeman appeared. The officer was a powerful man, and as he passed along his glance rested upon the sleeping child, and darting toward the poor thing he gave her a rap on the soles of her miserable shoes with his club. The child uttered a cry of alarm, opened her great black eyes, gazed in terror on the stalwart officer and with a cry sprung to her feet and glided away.

Jack ran after the child and soon overtook her.

"Halloo, sissy," he said, "you got beat out of your nap?"

"Yes; I didn't mean to go to sleep. I just sat down to rest a moment, but I was so tired I fell off asleep."

The child spoke in a low, sweet tone of voice.

"You had better hurry home and go to bed," said Jack.

"I have no home."

"You have no home!" exclaimed Jack in amazement.

"No; I ain't got no home."

"Well, I'll be hanged! if you have no home how do you get along?"

"Oh, I generally make a little money every day, enough to buy food and lodging, but a boy stole all the money I made to-day, and I've got to 'wagon it' to-night."

"Wagon it?" repeated Jack, "what sort of camping is that?"

"Oh, I'll get into some Dutchy's grocery wagon or under a cart."

"Have you had your supper?"

"No, sir."

"Well, see here, child, here's fifty cents, go and get something to eat and get a night's lodgings; and look out some boy don't steal your money to-morrow."

Jack could ill afford it, but he was not accustomed to such cases of suffering, and he handed the child the money.

The little girl looked well into his face, thanked him and darted away, and the very next instant Jack felt a light touch on his arm.

"Oh, sir," came a voice from under a veil.

"Halloo! what's the matter now?"

The veil was raised and the young man gazed upon a face that caused him to chill all over. It appeared as though he had been brought face to face with an apparition.

"I am starving!" murmured the woman, in a weak voice.

"Well, I'll be shot if you don't look as if you were clean starved out!"

"Can you give me a little assistance?"

Down Jack's hand went into his pocket, and out came a silver dollar. He handed the money to the woman, who dropped her veil, thanked him, and glided away.

"Well, I'll be scalped," muttered Jack, "there's a dollar and a half gone, and if I keep on I'll be busted myself."

Within a moment a third assault was made on his pile. An old woman, seemingly nigh on to eighty, came tottering toward him with extended hand; her lips moved, but no sound issued from between them; although her face expressed what her lips refused to tell; she looked miserable enough.

Down went Jack's hand. He brought forth a second silver dollar and placed it on the old woman's palm, and with the exclamation:

"There, I'll be clawed by a grizzly if I ain't got to stop!" he moved away.

Jack was a sensible fellow as well as generous, and he knew that no matter how great his sympathy, he could not afford to give away any more money, but he muttered to himself:

"A bad show for a stranger's settling around here, I reckon, when there's so many old squatters poorer than a lost squirrel when there's snow on the ground."

Jack had not gone far when, just on the corner of a street, he beheld a sight that caused his heart to stand still: an officer came down the street having in charge a beautiful young lady, handsomely dressed and in evident distress, as she was weeping copiously and pleading with the officer.

All Jack's sympathies were at once aroused. Such a sight he had never beheld before in all his life; to him it seemed like sacrilege for the officer to hold on to the arm of the beautiful creature.

"Hang it!" muttered Jack, "it's too tough; I can't stand it! I'm just going to see what's the matter."

The young man followed the officer and his prisoner a short distance down a side street, when he stepped forward, and, putting his hand on the officer's arm, said:

"Hold on here, officer! what are you doing with that young lady?"

The latter, as the officer came to a halt, clasped her hands, and, appealing to Jack, exclaimed:

"Oh, sir, I am innocent!—I am an innocent girl! Save me!"

"Come along," said the officer; and he grasped the girl again roughly by the arm.

CHAPTER IV.

JACK's blood boiled; he was smart and cute, but withal he lacked experience, and the girl looked so innocent and beautiful he believed there must be some mistake, and he seized hold of the officer's arm.

The latter's face flushed with anger, and, drawing his club, he exclaimed:

"What do you mean? Do you know you are interfering with an officer?"

"Oh, save me!—I am innocent! Do not let him take me to jail!" pleaded the girl.

She did look pure and innocent, and, to the susceptible Jack, it did not seem possible that a being so like an angel could have committed a crime.

"I don't want to interfere with you," said Jack; "I only want to talk to you a moment."

"I'll fix you!" exclaimed the officer, and while still holding on to the girl with one hand, he drew his club with the other and made a pass at Jack. The lad from the West caught the officer's arm, and the policeman was compelled to release his hold of the girl to grapple with Jack.

A struggle followed, and the girl glided away.

Jack did not attempt to strike the officer. He acted entirely on the defensive, and the policeman exclaimed:

"I'll take you in, young fellow, and you'll learn it won't do to interfere with an officer!"

"All right, I'll go along with you!"

"Do you surrender?"

"Yes."

"Well, come along."

The policeman seized Jack by the arm and led him along, and they soon reached the park, across which they started to walk.

As they went along Jack said:

"Now see here, officer, I want to ask you a question: what did you arrest the young lady for that just got away?"

"Why, you fool! you've got yourself into trouble for one of the worst women in New York! That gal is a born criminal!"

"A criminal!" exclaimed Jack.

"Yes; that gal is Belle Bryan, the queen of the confidence gang, and the female bunco stealer. She is a pickpocket and a thief of the worst kind. I've been 'laying' for her a long time, and to-night I had her just dead to rights, only you got her away from me!"

"Why did you not chase her up and catch her again?"

"No use to chase her, she had too good a start; I'll get her again some day, but that won't save you."

"So that beautiful young lady is a thief?"

"Yes; one of the most dangerous criminals in New York; but I'm sorry for you, young man, but I'll have to do my duty."

"I'm in a bad scrape?" said Jack.

"Yes; you are in a bad scrape."

"I reckon the judge will let me off when I tell him the truth."

"He'll let you off with about two years in state's prison!"

"Whew!" exclaimed Jack, "what do you mean?"

"Just what I say; you won't get a day less; it's serious business to aid a prisoner to escape, young man."

"Now look here, you ain't going to take me to jail?"

"I must do my duty."

"Between man and man you know I intended no harm."

"I can't help it, I warned you, and I must do my duty!"

"You're bound to take me to jail?"

"I am going to take you to jail and prefer the regular charge against you."

"You know I meant no harm?"

"That's all right, but I can't help it. I must do my duty. I can't lose my appointment for you."

"No one will know the difference if you let me go."

"There's no use talking, young man. The sergeant nipped that gal at Wallack's. He passed her over to me to take her to the station; and if I show up without her, and nothing to show for her absence, I am a goner. I'm sorry for you, and you're in a bad scrape."

"And you must take me in?"

"Yes."

"There's no help for it?"

"No, sir."

"I might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb," suddenly exclaimed Jack, and he seized the officer and gave him a twist and a toss that sent him whirling over on the greensward, while Jack sped away with the speed of a frightened antelope.

When the officer recovered his feet, the young man was nowhere in sight.

Meantime, Jack had put a long distance between himself and the spot where he had turned over the officer, and when he felt himself safe he exclaimed:

"Well, I'll be scratched by a wild cat if I ain't been pretty busy for a short stay around here! Mebbe the judge did give me good advice when he told me to foot it back to New Mexico!"

Jack determined to make for the lodging-house and turn in before he got "nipped" and lodged involuntarily. He proceeded along and was thinking over the incidents of the day and night, and lecturing himself as to his future course, when he felt a hand touch his elbow. He turned, and an elegantly dressed lady, with a veil drawn over her face, stood before him.

Jack was in an irritable mood after all his mishaps, and he demanded, in a sharp tone:

"Well, what do you want now?"

"Hush, speak low, and walk along or we'll attract attention!"

"See here, young lady," exclaimed Jack, as a certain suspicion ran through his mind, "I'm just going to foot it alone, I'm used to it, and although I'm much obliged for your company, I'm willing to excuse you."

"Hush, and come along! I want to ask you a question!"

As the veiled woman spoke she just drew her veil aside a trifle, and disclosed a face that caused the young man's heart to stand still. It was the face of the beautiful Belle Bryan, the girl whom the officer had denounced as the female bunco stealer and queen of the confidence gang.

"Come, walk on," said the girl, "or I'll have to leave you."

"Good-evening," said Jack, letting forth a decided hint that he preferred that she would leave him as quickly as she conveniently could.

"I want to talk to you," said the girl: "you need not be afraid; come on, there comes an officer."

Jack, as our readers have been informed, was trained to take his bearings, and the necessities of a Rocky Mountain life had developed a wonderful faculty of observation, and the lad dis-

covered at a glance, to his surprise, that although it was the same girl whom he had rescued from the officer, her dress was entirely different. A change had been wrought since he had seen her with the cop, and yet it was not over an hour since, through his intervention, she had made her escape.

Jack did not fancy walking along with her. He appeared to fear that he might get into some fresh trouble, and he said:

"I did you a good turn and came near getting into a scrape myself; but it's all right; be honest and you will be happy."

"Come, come, I've something to say to you."

Jack walked along with her a few steps when she said:

"That officer told you a terrible story about me, I suppose?"

"I didn't ask him any questions," said Jack, "I didn't stay long in his company."

The two walked along in silence a few moments, when the girl suddenly said as she handed a card to Jack:

"Keep that card; you may need a friend some day; send for me!"

CHAPTER V.

THE girl glided away without another word, and Jack felt sorry that he had not told her what the officer had said. There was something in her tones that led him to believe that possibly, after all, the policeman had maligned her; but she had "frit" and that was all there was about it. Jack was about to toss the card away, but a restraining impulse caused him to put it in his pocket; and we will here say that the day came when he was led to congratulate himself that he had kept the card.

Our young hero from the West gained his lodgings and turned in for the night, and the following day wandered around the city seeing the sights; and so also the third day was passed, but on the morning of the fourth day he counted his cash, and made up his mind that it was time to seek a situation. He bought a newspaper and conned over the advertisements, and cut out several which he determined to answer.

One advertisement was from a large grocery house, and Jack went to the place and soon found himself in line with at least fifty other applicants, and an odd-looking lot they were. He was not discouraged, however, and patiently awaited his turn, and was, after two hours, ushered into the presence of the advertiser. The latter glanced over the young man, and demanded:

"Well, what do you want?"

"I've come to apply for the position you've advertised."

"You won't suit," said he, shortly; and he pointed toward the door.

Jack decamped considerably chap-fallen. He had waited two hours to be sent off in two seconds.

He called at the other place, a large dry-goods house, and, upon stating his business, was informed that they had secured a man four hours ago. He proceeded to the third place, and was informed that they wanted a young man who had had some experience at the business; and so he proceeded to about a dozen different places with no better success.

Upon the following day he tried it again with no better success; and so a week passed by, and still he was without a position.

"It looks kind of blue," he said, talking to himself; "but I'm here to settle, and I'm going to stay."

He counted over his money. He had but forty cents left, and, as a grim smile played over his face, he muttered:

"I'll tarry out to-night, that's sure!"

Jack spent the day looking for a job of any kind, but he met with no luck, and that night he slept in one of the public parks. The night of the following day found him penniless, and again he camped in a public park.

And so three days passed, and he wandered around penniless and hungry. He was too proud to ask for something to eat, and he was actually starving, and that night as he wandered through the city, he said:

"Well, I reckon it's a failure, but hang me, if I don't starve before I'll beg! and I'll die a thousand times before I'll steal!"

Wearied, hungry and weak, Jack sat down on a stoop to rest, and soon, despite his efforts to the contrary, he fell off into a sleep. How long he had been sleeping he did not know, but he was awakened by a light touch upon his face.

Jack opened his eyes and his glance fell upon a plainly dressed and lovely faced girl.

"Excuse me," said the girl, "but I touched you because I feared you were dead, you looked so wan and white."

"No, I'm alive yet, miss, but I wish I were dead."

"Have you no home?"

Jack became fully aroused and his pride came to his rescue, and he walked away. The young man wandered to one of the public parks and sat down on a bench, and although a handsome-looking fellow when well and hearty, he looked miserable enough as he wearily dropped upon the park bench. He had been sitting there but a few moments, when a female came and sat beside him, and as she did so, by the light of a park lamp, the young man recognized the same sweet-faced girl who had awakened him when he had been sleeping on the stoop.

Jack rose from his seat and was going away when the girl in a sweet voice said:

"Do not go, I want to speak a few words with you; come, sit down."

Jack could not resist the pleading tone, and he took a seat.

"You are a stranger in New York?"

"Yes."

"Where are you from?"

"The West."

"You have no friends in the city?"

"No, miss, I've no friends here."

"Your relatives all live out West, I suppose?"

"I have no relatives."

"You have no relatives?"

"Not a relative in the whole world, that I know."

"How strange," said the girl, "I am also an orphan, and I have no relatives that I know; but tell me, have you a home?"

Jack fixed his handsome eyes on the girl and looked at her sharply.

"You need not be afraid of me. I am an honest girl. I was passing the stoop where I saw you lying, and since you walked away I have been constrained by a strange impulse to follow you, and I will tell you why. I came to New York from the country, poor and friendless. I had to make my own way, and as I have succeeded pretty well, I may help you."

"Thank you, miss; but I reckon I can take care of myself."

"You haven't had a bit to eat to-day?" said the persistent girl.

Jack was not a liar, and he made no answer.

"Come with me," said the girl, "and I will get you something to eat."

"No, thank you!"

"Have you tried to get work?"

"Yes."

"And you have failed?"

"Yes."

"I may be able to get you a position where you can earn a living, at least," said the girl, "if you are not too proud."

"I am not proud. I'll work at anything that's honest."

"I work in a shop, and I know that they want two or three men, and if you will meet me to-morrow down at the factory, I will introduce you to the foreman."

"All right, I will come to the place if you will give me the address."

The girl wrote an address in a little book that Jack carried, and she wrote her own name and told Jack to inquire for her when he came down to the shop.

"I am much obliged," said Jack.

"Will you come?"

"Yes; I will go anywhere to get a job."

A moment the girl was silent, but at length she said:

"If any one asks you any questions when you come down to the shop, you must let them think you have known me for a long time; tell them I am your cousin."

"That would be a lie!" said Jack.

"No matter; it's nobody's business."

"But why shall I say that?"

The girl fixed her pretty clear blue eyes on the young man, looked him square in the face, and said:

"It's all right; you will know, some day, why it's necessary. There will be no harm in it."

Jack was no fool, as we have said, and a glimmer of the truth flashed through his mind.

"I will come down," he said, and was about to add an explanation, when suddenly a policeman came rushing toward them, and roughly seized hold of the girl.

Without a moment's reflection, Jack rushed

madly into the worst scrape he had experienced since his arrival in New York.

CHAPTER VI.

JACK'S blood boiled when he saw the officer roughly grab hold of the fair girl and drag her from the seat; and his anger reached its wildest point when he saw the policeman shove her forward in a brutal manner, while he walked after her with uplifted club.

The lad from the West sprung forward and exclaimed, as he seized the officer's arm.

"Hold on there! What in thunder are you doing?"

The officer did not make a reply in words, but he made a lunge at Jack with his club. The lad was beside himself at the moment, and, dodging the club, he dealt the officer a powerful blow that knocked him down. As the policeman fell, a second officer came rushing forward, and Jack grappled with policeman number two, or he would have been badly clubbed. He upset the officer and wrenched his club from his hand, just as number one regained his feet; and, in self-defense, he was compelled to use the captured club to save himself, and he knocked the policeman down a second time.

Several of the usual park loungers had gathered around, and they called to Jack to run. The girl had already disappeared, and Jack cast the club away and took to his heels.

The young man was not a law-breaker, nor at all belligerent, and yet it appeared to be his misfortune to constantly get into all manner of scrapes. He had been in the great city only two weeks, and had been engaged in four or five scrimmages, and every time he had been on the side of right.

He ran several squares and had settled down to a walk, and was wandering along undecided what to do, when a second time he felt a hand laid upon his arm; the youth, supposing it to be an officer, turned quickly with uplifted arm, when his glance fell upon the fair-faced girl who had been the innocent cause of drawing him into the *mêlée*.

"You here?" demanded Jack.

"Yes; I followed you."

"Why did that officer assail you?"

"Because he was a brute, and was governed by appearances without stopping to find out the truth."

"I do not understand yet," said Jack.

"He assaulted me because I was talking to you."

"Was that a reason for assailing a young lady?"

"He mistook me for some poor creature who was seeking to obtain money from you."

Jack suddenly discerned the truth, and said:

"Well, hang him! I'm glad I served him out."

"You were very fortunate in making your escape, and there was no need for you to have got into the trouble."

"Do you suppose I was going to stand by and see a young lady abused?"

"We poor people are compelled to submit to considerable injustice at times."

"I am not a poor person."

"I thought you were penniless?"

"So I am; but I've youth and health, and I'm not asking any odds of any one."

"We will go in here," said the girl.

They were in front of a cheap restaurant.

Jack hesitated, but the girl whispered:

"Come along; whatever it costs you can pay me back some day."

The real fact was, Jack was on the verge of starvation. He had not asked to be fed, but he could not die while food was offered to him, and he accompanied the girl into the eating-saloon. The latter ordered the meal, and she ordered a good one, and Jack's heart overflowed with gratitude.

"Tell me your story," said the girl. "What is your name?"

"Jack Gamework."

The young miss laughed and remarked:

"Well, the manner in which you took my part to-night would suggest that you are well named."

"I couldn't do less than take your part."

"Tell me your history."

Jack told his simple story, and the girl listened with deep interest.

While telling his story Jack had an opportunity under the glare of light in the restaurant to study the face of his benefactress. The fair-faced girl was evidently poor—a poor working-

girl. She was very plainly dressed; the materials of her clothing were of the commonest sort; but withal she looked neat and nice; but it was not her dress that most arrested his attention. He discovered that she was a really beautiful girl, and yet at the first glance she did not look so handsome, and it struck Jack that there was something mysterious about her. There had been a singular transformation in her appearance since he had first glanced at her when aroused from his sleep on the stoop. He had observed what appeared to be an ugly scar on her face, but the scar had mysteriously disappeared, and despite several other little facts which will be disclosed as our narrative progresses, a study of the face revealed that she was indeed a really beautiful girl.

A chill passed through Jack's heart as he thought over the change in her appearance, and a suspicion passed through his mind that caused him to feel really sad.

Having completed his own narrative, he said: "Turn about is fair play—now what is your name?"

"Marian Blair."

"Tell me your history."

"I have never told my story to any one."

"Tell it to me."

"I will; we have met in a strange manner, and there appears to be a similarity in our experiences; you are an orphan, so am I, and like you I have my own way to make in the world."

"I hope we are alike clean through!" interrupted Jack.

"What do you mean?" demanded the girl.

"I'll make an honest living or die!" said Jack.

The girl's fair face became suffused with blushes, and it was several seconds before she found voice to answer:

"And so will I; and I am glad to hear you speak as you do!"

She had discerned from Jack's remark his evil suspicion, and the discovery was the cause of her deep blushes.

Jack saw the blush and noted the answer, and was ashamed of himself. At once and in a friendly tone he said:

"Come, tell me your history."

"My story, like yours, is briefly told; my father was a school-teacher up in the country. He went to the town where I was born when he was a young man to take charge of the school. He met my mother, who was the daughter of an Englishman, a surveyor, I believe. Her father was a reticent man who never spoke of his own history. He was a widower when he arrived in the town, and shortly afterward died from the effects of an accident which befell him while surveying the line of a railroad. It appeared after his death that he had no means, and the neighbors could not find that he had any relatives, and he left only a few papers—his marriage certificate and one or two letters from a lawyer. I believe my mother, a mere child, was adopted by a farmer, and she was living an unhappy life under the domination of the farmer's second wife, when she and my father met, and they were married. My father's salary was a small one, and they were very poor. Mother died when I was about a year old; my father never recovered from the shock, and two years ago he died, and at the age of fourteen I was left alone in the world without a known relative, and practically penniless, as my father's estate only consisted of the furniture in our little cottage."

The girl's story at this moment was interrupted by a noisy party who were just leaving the saloon. After their departure she resumed her narrative, after having first asked:

"Shall I go on with my story?"

"Yes," said Jack; "I am deeply interested; proceed."

CHAPTER VII.

"AN administrator was appointed, and our little goods were sold, and the sum of two hundred dollars realized. A guardian was appointed, and a trustee, and I was placed in care of a young married couple."

"Well, I'll be hanged!" said Jack. "Why didn't they give you the money?"

"Because I was not of age. They are very strict up in country towns. You know I am to get my fortune when I come of age."

"A big fortune to wait for!" said Jack, with a smile; "but go on."

"I was placed with the people to be treated as one of the family; but I had not been there two weeks before I discovered that I was not-

ing but a common servant, and I was ill-treated from the very first hour I was in the house."

"Why didn't you complain to your guardian?"

"I did, and he told me it was all nonsense, and that I couldn't expect to live idle like a rich young lady. I stood it for two months, and then I made up my mind to strike out into the world and do or die! And one night with a little valise containing all my clothes and thirteen dollars in money, I stole away and came on here to New York."

"You are a brave girl!" said Jack, admiringly.

"I would rather have died than remain where I was; my life was miserable. When I reached New York I went straight to a factory and got work on the second day, and I've been working in the same shop ever since; my employer is a good, kind, and upright man, and all his employes are well treated. I would like to get into a public school as a teacher, but, as I have no friends, of course that is impossible, but some of these days I will open a school; that is the height of my ambition!"

"Can you teach?"

"Can I teach? Why it's wonderful how well I have been educated; my father was a very learned man, and he spent all his leisure time instructing me. And now it's late and I must go home; it's strange how I should have met you, but something told me when I saw you lying on that stoop lonely this evening, that you were a young man who had come to New York to seek your fortune."

"And I'm going to make it!" said Jack, with a determined look upon his face.

"Of course you will, and some day you'll help me with money to start a large school."

"I shouldn't be surprised if I were to do something for you some day," said Jack in a peculiar tone, and there was a far-away look in his eyes as though the mists of the future had cleared away for a moment, and had permitted him a passing glimpse of what was to come.

"You have no place to sleep to-night?" said Marian.

"Oh, I don't mind that; I'm used to sleeping in the open air. I've done it for months at a time."

"But you're liable to be arrested at any moment."

"Is sleeping a crime, when some poor, homeless wretch finds a quiet spot to camp over-night?"

"It is not looked upon as a crime exactly, but it is not permitted. The city provides a place in the station; but you would not like to go there, because they do look upon a homeless person as a sort of criminal, as a matter of course."

"Well, it's kinder suspicious not to have a home."

"I'm sure I can get you work down at our shop, and you can pay me back. Here's a dollar."

"I'll be clawed to death by a grizzly before I'll take a cent!"

"You can pay me again."

"No; I'll just camp out until I get to work."

"You must take the money."

"I won't—and that settles it; but I'll see you to your boarding-house."

"I keep house, but I can't invite you to the same house, as it's a girls' lodging-house where I stay. Some good ladies have leased the building, and they let out rooms to us, and we provide our own meals or get them out. It's a nice place for homeless girls; we're safe there. But I want you to take the dollar."

"I won't do it—that's square!"

"It's necessary for you to be down at the factory by seven o'clock."

"I'll be there."

"But suppose you should be hauled in by a policeman, then you couldn't come. No, no, you take the money and lodge somewhere, and to-morrow if you get a job you can go into a boarding-house."

"I won't take the money, and now come along, I'll see you home, as this man wants to close up his place."

"You will not take the money?"

"I will not, by jiminy, I won't! and if you insist upon it I won't come down to-morrow for the job!"

"You will be careful, then? I strangely have come to feel as much interest in you as though I were your sister."

"So you shall be my sister, and I will be your brother; but I won't take the dollar."

The two orphans so strangely met started

forth, and as they walked along Marian gave Jack full directions as to where he was to go, and as to how he was to act on the following day, and she concluded with the exclamation:

"Here is where I live."

"In that big house?"

"Yes."

"Why it looks like a grand hotel."

"It's a home for working-girls, and all I pay is two dollars a week for my room; it's a beneficent place for girls like me. But good-night, take care of yourself and be on hand to-morrow."

"I'll be there," said Jack, intending to make good his promise, and little dreaming of the thrilling adventures which were to prevent him from going down to secure the job.

The fair Marian had made one last effort to induce the young man to accept the money, but he had resolutely and steadfastly refused.

Jack had enjoyed a good meal and he felt quite strong and refreshed; his old-time strength and vigor had returned, and he walked along the street with a firm step and buoyant spirit at the prospect of securing employment in the morning.

"Halloo, old man!" came a salutation.

Jack turned and beheld a fine-looking, well-dressed young man standing before him.

"Where are you going in such a hurry?" demanded the stranger.

Jack could not answer "home," as he had no home, and in order to conceal the fact he made an answer both pertinent and evasive:

"It's none of your business where I'm going!"

"You needn't get huffy when a man asks you a civil question."

"And you need not get offended when a man gives you a truthful answer!" replied Jack.

"Do you want to make some money?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know whether you would like to make a few dollars or not?"

"It's rather a late hour to make a bargain," said Jack.

"That's so, but circumstances alter cases. I'm in a hole."

Jack had never heard that particular expression; the fact was, the saying had just come in vogue, and the young man from the West struck an idea that the stranger was fooling him, and he said:

"You're in a hole, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, my advice to you is to dig out!"

"Hold on, let me explain. Come, let's go over and have a drink, there's a beer saloon over there open and I'll tell you my fix."

"I don't know as I've any interest in your fix."

"Hang it! are you dumb? I want a man to assist me in a little matter, and I will pay him well for his trouble; it's late at night, and I don't know where to get a man to assist me, and seeing you come along I thought I'd try and hire you, and if you wish to make a five-dollar bill it's all right, and if you don't I'll look around and try and get some one else, that's all."

"What do you want me to do?"

"I want you to help me carry a trunk from one house to another and I'll pay you five dollars for the job."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE young man looked respectable, and yet a suspicion flashed through our hero's mind that all was not right. The fact was, the young man from the West was a suspicious sort of a chap at best.

"Can't you wait until morning to move your trunk? You can get plenty of men to help you then."

"I'll tell you; I have not a moment to spare. I came on to New York from Boston to work for a firm, supposing they were honest men, but I have since found out that they are carrying on a fraudulent business. I am afraid to attempt to get my trunk away in the day-time."

The stranger had struck the right vein for securing Jack's assistance. Our hero was a sympathetic young fellow, and the moment he learned that the young man was in trouble he was prepared to aid him.

"Are you telling me the truth?" demanded Jack.

"What object would I have in telling you a lie?"

They were standing under a street-lamp, and Jack could plainly see the young man's face.

His features were delicate and refined, and his whole appearance was that of a respectable young man.

"I'll go and help you with your trunk," said Jack.

"I want you to understand that I've got to steal it away. You see, these men are terrible fellows and I am afraid of them, and I want to get my trunk away without their knowledge."

"That's all right."

The stranger had won Jack's confidence, and as they walked along the street the young man told Jack quite an interesting history of himself, and our hero became enthusiastic in the adventure.

The young men at length reached a store, and Jack was led into a side-hallway and along to a rear door, where an entrance was made into the store.

The young man had a key to both the outside and inside door, and all seemed straight and fair enough and in accordance with his story.

On the floor lay a small-sized trunk.

"You take that trunk," said the young man, "and I will take this bag, and we will get away as fast as we can."

All the incidents appeared to accord with the young man's statement so nicely that all our hero's suspicions were allayed, and he seized the trunk, which he found quite heavy.

"It's rather heavy for a small trunk," said Jack.

"Yes; my tools are all in it."

The explanation appeared satisfactory, and Jack shouldered the trunk.

"I will go out first," said the young man, "and you stand in the door-way: and when you hear me give a whistle, you come out and we will go ahead."

Jack stood in the hall near the door for some minutes, and at length he heard a whistle, and he stepped forth, and had gone but a few steps when suddenly two men appeared. One seized hold of the trunk and lifted it to the ground, while the second seized Jack and clapped a cocked pistol to his temple.

"We've got you this time, you scoundrel!" said the man; and ere Jack was aware, a pair of handcuffs were clapped upon his wrists and he stood a helpless prisoner.

"What does this mean?" demanded Jack, when he recovered from the first shock of surprise.

The two men laughed, and one of them said: "You're well got-up, old man, but don't attempt to come the innocent on us."

"Where is the young man?" demanded Jack.

"What young man?"

"The young man who engaged me to carry this trunk for him."

Again the two men laughed, and one of them said, sternly:

"See here, young fellow. We've got you dead to rights. We've been on the lay for you; we expected you, and it's no use to play the innocent on us."

One of the men drew a mask-lantern from his pocket, slid the mask, and flashed the light straight in Jack's face.

"Do you 'snugg'?" asked one of the men.

"No; he's a stranger to me, but he's got-up well, and he's a bad 'un. He's from the West, I reckon. But let's get along with him to the station-house."

"I'll take care of him. Can you carry the trunk?"

The second man took a lug at the trunk and said:

"It's full of 'loot,' but I can get it along."

"Here, I'll give you a hand."

The man who held Jack attached a double-handcuff to his prisoner, locking his man to his own wrist, and with his freed hand seized one end of the trunk and said:

"Come, we'll march!"

Jack began to realize the terrible scrape he was into, and, when too late, could have kicked himself for being such a silly fool as to be led into such a trap. He perceived that the two men were detectives. He realized that the young man with the nice face was a sneak-thief or midnight burglar, who had inveigled him into assisting in the removal of his "swag."

"Well, well!" thought Jack, "who would ever have believed that the son of my mother would be arrested as a midnight burglar?"

Addressing the men, he said:

"Are you officers?"

"Well, now, that's cool!" answered one of the men.

"Listen to me," said Jack. "I'll swear I am as innocent as you are of doing anything

wrong knowingly. I was engaged by a nice-looking young man to help him carry a trunk."

"Oh, what are you giving us?" came the answer, in a satirical tone.

Jack made up his mind that it was useless to attempt to talk to the officers, and he kept silent. He was taken to the station-house and locked in a cell.

There was a grim humor about Jack at all times, and he was of a hopeful and buoyant temperament and not easily discouraged, and as the iron door closed against him he muttered:

"Well, this is a nice camp for a new settler!" and after a moment he added: "I said I'd come to New York to stay, and it kinder looks as though I had!"

Later on Jack took a more serious view of the situation, and blamed himself for his simplicity. As he thought matters over, he saw through the whole scheme by which he had got into such a serious scrape, and he began to discern the dire consequences.

His decision was that the nice young man was a burglar—that he had visited the shop selected for the robbery, had packed up the "swag," and then had taken the chances of securing an innocent man to get the "boodle" away.

The scheme was a cunning one and an old trick, and the records of the courts prove that innocent men have been sent to prison who have been similarly duped.

Had Jack got away with the trunk to a safe place, the thief or thieves would have taken possession and he would have been sent adrift.

"What a fool I was!" muttered Jack, "and I've thought myself so smart all the time!"

Alas! the poor young man forgot that dire necessity has often got honest men into trouble.

As he thought over the matter he again remarked:

"My version of the tale will be all nice enough to tell, but how am I going to prove it? I am a friendless stranger in New York, circumstances are dead against me, and I can not even tell who the real culprits were, and I'm in a bad scrape."

The youth paced the narrow limits of his cell until morning, unable to sleep and driven almost mad as he contemplated the chances against him.

At length he muttered:

"I can not help it. I am innocent; I was only seeking to earn an honest dollar, and I have one friend in heaven who will help—otherwise what will become of me?"

CHAPTER IX.

JACK thought himself friendless, and yet a friend was to step forward to his aid from a quarter where he had least reason to expect one, and he was to learn that, after all, kind and generous actions, as well as evil ones, oftentimes bring their own reward or punishment.

At an early hour in the morning Jack was taken from his cell, led upstairs and placed in a private room under guard, and after awhile the captain of the precinct and one of the officers who had arrested him entered the room.

"Are you hungry?" asked the detective.

"No."

The captain scanned the youth's face, and, after an interval, said:

"Young man, you are in a bad scrape."

"I am innocent," said Jack.

"Oh, yes; we know you are innocent; certainly—that's understood. But come, now, open up your part in this scheme, and tell us who was with you in this job?"

The speaker was the detective, and his tone and manner offended our hero, who answered:

"I've nothing to say. I've told you my story, and if you do not wish to believe it I can't help it."

"See here, young man," said the captain; "I have not heard your story. Come, tell me all about it."

Jack, in a simple, straightforward manner, related the facts, and the captain, who listened attentively, remarked, at the conclusion of the narrative:

"That's an old story, young man."

"I can't help it; it's the truth."

"It won't go far in your favor with the judge, unless you can prove it."

"I can not prove my statements unless the man who got me into this scrape comes forward to save me."

"There is not much danger of his coming forward, and the best thing for you to do is, make a clean breast of it and tell the truth."

"I've told the truth."

"And you mean to stick to your statement?"

"Yes, I do; it's the truth, and I'll stick to it."

"You were not hovering around that store yesterday, were you?"

"What store?"

"The store that was robbed."

"No, sir, I was not."

"You were not looking in the window?"

"Not to my recollection."

"You were not in the neighborhood at all?"

"No, sir."

"You are sure?"

"Yes, sir, I am sure."

"You'll stick to that, I suppose?" said the detective.

"Yes, I will."

A strange smile played over the detective's face as he remarked to the captain:

"He's a bad 'un, cap; he lies with about as straight a face as any chap I ever met."

"You are sure you were not in the vicinity of the store?" asked the captain.

"Yes, I am sure."

The captain rapped on the table, and an officer entered the room.

"Bring up four or five of your lodgers," said the captain.

The officer disappeared, but in a few moments returned, followed by several rough-looking men. The handcuffs were removed from Jack's hands; the rough-looking men were ranged in a row and Jack was placed in the center, and a moment later a nice-looking gentleman was ushered into the room.

The moment the old gentleman entered the room Jack remembered that he had seen the old man somewhere, but he could not place him.

"Select the man whom you saw looking in your window yesterday," directed the captain.

The old gentleman ran his eye over the line, and, stepping forward, placed his hand on Jack.

"You are sure?"

"That is the scoundrel; I am as sure as I am standing here."

"No mistake?"

"I could pick him out of a hundred, captain. I am sure. I didn't like his looks when I saw him eying my valuables."

"That will do," said the captain, and a shadow passed over his face.

A moment later and a young lady was shown into the room.

The moment the lady raised her veil Jack's heart sunk within him and he turned pale. He remembered where he had seen the old gentleman; he remembered where he had seen the young lady. He had seen both in a large jewelry store. He did remember looking in at the window of a store on the preceding day; but when he returned at night with the thief, after the store was closed, he did not recognize the place, and, being a stranger in the city, wandering around from place to place, he did not remember the various localities through which he passed; but, upon seeing the girl, he did remember having seen her in a store, and it came to him then, when too late, that it must have been the store where the robbery had been attempted.

It was not a strange incident that, under all the circumstances, Jack had failed to recognize the place or had forgotten the fact of his having been looking in a particular store window upon the preceding day, as, having nothing to do, he had probably spent some time gazing into the windows of many stores.

The captain ordered the young lady to pick out the man she had seen gazing into the store window.

The girl ran her eye over the line, and went straight to Jack.

"You are sure, miss?"

"I am sure."

"You can not be mistaken?"

"No, sir."

"At what hour did you see him?"

"It was about five o'clock."

"That will do. Put the darbies on him."

The young lady left the room, and the manacles were again put on Jack's hands.

The youth's soul was filled with despair. He realized how, through a lapse of memory, he stood at the start a convicted liar, and recognized how all his statements would naturally be disbelieved.

"Well, young man, what have you got to say now?" demanded the captain.

"Nothing," answered Jack, in a despairing tone.

"Do you still deny loafing around that store?"

"No, sir."

"What made you deny it?"

"When you first asked me I did not remember."

"Oh, you did not remember?"

"No, sir."

"But you were arrested within a hundred feet of that very store, with the trunk in your possession."

"I am a stranger in the city; and I am not familiar with any one neighborhood. I did not remember having been in that vicinity."

"Oh, you did not remember?"

"No, sir. I have wandered over many a mile without taking the bearings of where I was passing. I had enough to think of, sir."

"What were you thinking of when you passed along with your eyes open without seeing anything?"

"I was thinking of my miserable situation, and thinking what I should do to get a position where I might earn my bread."

"And you did not recognize the store that you had seen in the afternoon when you revisited it at night?"

"On my honor, I did not."

"This is a likely story, young man—a very likely story! and I suppose you expect me to believe it."

"No, sir, I do not expect you to believe it, but it is the truth, and again, sir, suppose I did look in the store window, it does not follow I meant to rob. I looked in the windows of a great many stores."

"But you were not caught coming out of the other ones with stolen goods," came the pertinent answer.

CHAPTER X.

JACK saw, as stated, how through a simple mistake he had deepened the shadow which overhung his future. Indeed, he was helpless to extricate himself. He knew that nothing he could say would avail him.

"You now remember being at the store?"

"Yes, sir."

"What were you doing there?"

"Nothing."

"Why didn't you admit you were there?"

"I had forgotten it."

"You recall it easy enough though when we have you dead to rights with facts."

"Yes, sir, I admit that I have made a fatal error; but I still declare that I have told the truth to the best of my knowledge, and did not intentionally deny being at the store in the afternoon."

"What do you take me for, young man?"

"The captain here," answered Jack, innocently.

The captain laughed and said:

"You do play it well; but now, listen: we've got the evidence dead against you, but there were older and more experienced men behind you; those are the men we want. And now, if you will give the whole business away, I will promise to do all in my power to get you a light sentence. But you must make a clean breast of it and tell us the whole truth."

"I've nothing to tell, sir."

"That won't do, young man."

"I swear I am telling the truth."

"Oh, bother about the truth! We have just proved you a cool-headed liar. Now, what we want is to get at your 'pals' in this business; and if you help us to do it, so much the better for you."

"I have no 'pals.'"

"Just say right out you're not giving anything away."

"I'll say anything you please, so long as you do not ask me to tell a lie."

"Oh, no; you never tell a lie; you are the most truthful James I ever met," sneered the detective. "But we have to help your memory when we wish to get the truth out of you, and then you're ready to own up. Now, who were with you in this matter?"

"I tell you I have no friends in New York, no acquaintances; I am a stranger."

"And you mean to stick to that and—"

The detective's further remarks were interrupted by an exclamation of surprise. An officer in undress had just entered the room, and as his eyes fell upon Jack, he exclaimed:

"Well, I'll be hanged if that ain't the scoundrel after all!"

"Aha!" exclaimed the detective, "do you know him, Ned?"

"Well, I should say I did."

Again Jack's heart sunk within him; it appeared as though all the evil fates were arrayed

against him; the officer in undress uniform was the fellow from whom he had rescued the queen of the confidence women.

"Who is he, Ned?" asked the detective.

"He is a pal of Belle Bryan, the queen of the confidence gang."

"Aha!" ejaculated the detective, "I thought we'd get his pedigree," and he smiled all over with triumph.

"Yes, he's the villain who rescued Belle from me when I was taking her in, and it's through him I'm suspended at this moment."

Jack's face was pale as a ghost.

"How is that, young fellow?" said the detective.

"I did help a young lady to escape from the officer."

"You helped a young lady to escape! Oh, you innocent lamb! you high-souled gallant and champion!" said the officer in tones of satirical contempt.

It did appear as though everything was turning dead against Jack.

"You didn't know her, you had never seen her before, I suppose?" said the officer.

"Never before that moment!" affirmed Jack.

"You thought she was some innocent lamb like yourself, whom the officer was dragging off to jail?"

"I did, sir."

"Well, you are about as much injured a youth as I ever came across; you are innocence itself. But up you'll go, my darling, and it will be a long time before you will rescue any more pretty dears from the clutches of the police. Dear me, what an unfortunate 'cuss' you are for such a 'jerk' of innocence! You snatch a thief from an officer, thinking she was a weeping beauty; you get caught stealing a trunk of jewelry—caught in the act; you are convicted as a downright liar, and yet you are a stranger in the city, and a simple dupe of a more active thief. You rascal! I'd serve you right if I clubbed you to within an inch of your life!"

"I'll make you take back all you're saying some day," said Jack, turning red with shame and anger.

The detective laughed as he answered:

"Oh, my dear, there are a dozen fellows up the river who have the call on you in that game of vengeance on me. Yes, yes; there's tougher men than you who have sworn to get square with me when they get out; but they ain't out yet, and you ain't in, but you will be, and I feel as safe as a king loved by his people for a little while yet. But now come, young fellow, we've got you dead to rights, but there's one chance to make things easy for you."

"I am not asking any chance."

"You had better take him and 'mug' him," said the captain. "He's a bad 'un, but I don't think we've got his picture in the gallery."

Jack's blood ran cold. He recognized that the term "mugging" meant having his picture taken for the Rogues' Gallery, and oh, what a prospect would remain for him in life after that! Indeed, it were better for him had he died e'er an evil fate ever turned his steps toward New York!

"Come, young fellow, you've one more chance."

"What do you want me to do?" asked Jack.

"Make a clean breast of it; tell who was with you in this job."

"And if I do?"

"I'll get the district attorney to let up light on you; get it down so you will not get over ten years at the outside."

Jack's heart stood still; it did seem as though there was no hope for him. He could not see how he would ever be able to establish his innocence; the most singular and tragic series of incidents combined to testify to his guilt.

"I wish I could tell you something," said Jack.

"Oh, give over that kind of talk, young fellow, you can't 'cram' me, and you might as well take a 'tumble'."

"I've tumbled far enough," said Jack, and he cast his eyes down on the manacles that bound his wrists.

"You're dead set, ain't you?"

"I've nothing to say."

"All right, it will be too late when you do make up your mind to 'squeal'; but I tell you if you will 'open up,' I'll do all I can for you, and I'm a man of my word."

"I've nothing to say; I've nothing to tell," said Jack.

"That's your decision, eh?"

"I couldn't decide otherwise if I wished to; I never saw the man before in my life who got

me to carry off the trunk, but I'll tell what I'll do; let me go free and I'll find him; yes, I'll find him if it takes me day and night for a year, and I'm a good fellow on a trail!"

"You are a cool 'un; yes, you beat 'em all!" said the detective, and he rose and grasped poor Jack by the arm. The young man from the West, the brave, high-spirited, honorable youth was led to the official photograph gallery and "mugged" for the Rogues' Gallery, and from the photographer's he was taken to the Tombs and placed in a cell, and again, as the door closed on him, he muttered:

"Ten years! Yes, I reckon I've come to stay!"

CHAPTER XI.

JACK was a resolute fellow, and, conscious of his innocence, resolved to be resigned to his fate. Muttering to himself he said:

"Something must turn up in my favor; everything has turned up against me, and now it's time for the trail to make a turn. I am innocent, and an innocent man can not suffer long, that's sure."

Jack was furnished food, and he eat with a good appetite, and when night came he stretched himself upon his bed and slept the sleep of the innocent.

Upon the following morning he was taken to court for a preliminary examination, and was compelled to stand and sit before a crowd of morbid people who always crowd the court-room to gratify their curiosity.

The evidence was dead against him; the detective testified to the arrest, and the proprietor of the store and his daughter gave their testimony. The officer also testified to Jack's rescue of the famous criminal, Belle Bryan. The captain of police also testified to Jack's false hood concerning his presence at the store at a certain hour of the same evening of the attempted robbery.

The case against the youth was clear enough; but the judge asked him what he had to say.

Jack's answer was "Nothing," and he was formally held to await the action of the Grand Jury, on the charge of burglary and house-breaking—one of the most serious charges, save the charge of murder, known to the law.

When Jack was returned to the prison he made up his mind that it was all up with his prospects in New York. He could plainly see that the evidence was so dead against him that conviction and sentence were certain.

The young man's spirits fell under the burden of his misfortunes, and he came to a desperate resolve.

"I will never go to prison! I will never stand trial!" he muttered. "I have tried to be honest; I have wronged no one; and yet here I am in jail as a criminal, without a cent of money, without a friend in the world—why should I live?"

The last words betrayed his determination. The poor goaded youth saw but one way out of his troubles, and he calmly resolved to take his own life.

The determination was not only foolish, but wicked. Escape by means of death by one's own hand is always a poor, mean, cowardly mode of escaping the ills of this life, and there is no truer proverb than "with life there is hope;" and Shakespeare has well said, in "Hamlet," "Fly to ills we know not of."

Jack, however, was young, inexperienced, and without good or friendly counsel. It did appear as though the chances were all against him, and that his case was hopeless, and it was a terrible thing for a young man to look forward to ten or fifteen years of prison life and association with criminals of the worst sort.

Jack sat in his cell thinking calmly over the method by which he should release himself from his present ills by way of the grave, when his cell door opened and a visitor was announced.

When Jack's visitor raised her veil, he recognized Marian Blair. The fair girl's face was pale, and she appeared anxious and sorely distressed.

"You can stay twenty minutes," said the keeper as he closed the cell door and locked the fair girl in with the prisoner.

"You here!" exclaimed Jack.

"Yes; I read an account of your examination in the papers, and I came to see you; surely you are not guilty?"

"Do you think I am innocent?"

"Yes."

Jack laughed in a sort of sardonic manner, and the young girl gave a start and fixed her lovely eyes on him in an earnest way.

"Tell me you are innocent!" said the girl.

"And will you believe me?"

"Yes."

"You will accept my simple word?"

"I will."

"Thank you; I am glad there is one person who will believe me; but tell me, have you read the evidence against me?"

"I have."

"And you are still willing to believe I am innocent?"

"I am."

"Whence arises your faith in me?"

"I have been thinking the whole matter over, and I can readily see how you may be innocent. Tell me just how you got into this scrape."

Jack told his story in a simple and straightforward manner, and when he had finished the fair Marian said:

"I believe every word you say."

"Thank you; but, miss, it will be hard to make a judge believe my story."

"I will admit that you are in a desperate position."

"Yes; there is no hope for me."

"Have you consulted with a lawyer?"

"How could I employ a lawyer? I have not a cent in the world."

"Has no lawyer been here to offer his services?"

"Not a soul has been near me save you."

A moment the beautiful visitor was silent, but at length she said:

"Something must be done; an innocent young man must not be sent to jail!"

"Salt peter won't save me," said Jack.

"But you must have a lawyer."

"No; I do not need one."

And do you mean to be sent to jail without making a struggle to save yourself?"

"This is the last jail I will ever be confined in," said Jack.

The girl lowered her voice and asked, timidly:

"Do you mean to try and escape?"

"Yes."

"I do not see how it will be possible."

"Oh, I know a way to get out."

"You will only be recaptured or become a fugitive the rest of your life, and be driven to commit an actual crime in the end."

"I'll never be recaptured."

The girl caught the expression of Jack's face, and appeared to discern his intention, and she exclaimed:

"No; you must not do that!"

"Do what?"

"Commit suicide!"

"Who said anything about suicide?"

"I fear that is your intention. Now listen to me: I have one hundred and fifty dollars in the bank; you shall have this money, and we will get a lawyer."

Jack gazed at the girl in astonishment.

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say."

"Do you suppose I would permit you to waste your hard-earned savings on a lawyer?"

"Yes."

"Marian, will you tell me why you take such interest in me?"

"I can not tell."

"Is there any reason that you could give?"

"Only that like me you are an orphan, and that you came to New York alone and penniless to make your way in the world."

"You are a good, kind girl, and you will be an angel some day; you are an angel on earth now, but alas! you can not aid me. I am young and inexperienced, but I am no fool! a lawyer would take your money and do nothing for me; no one can aid me, unless the villain who got me into this scrape should come forward and declare my innocence and accept the punishment for his own crimes."

"It is not likely he will ever do that."

"No; and, therefore, my case is hopeless."

"But you must not think of killing yourself. Something may be done."

"Nothing can be done to save me now."

"Will you make me a promise?"

"What do you want me to promise?"

"Promise to do me a favor."

"What is the favor?"

"You must trust me and make the promise blindly."

"I will," said Jack.

CHAPTER XII.

"You will really give me your promise, and keep it?"

"If I give my promise I will keep it."
 "I wish you to promise me not to kill yourself until I see you again."
 "You are so good, I am bound to give you my promise."
 "And you will swear to keep it?"
 "It is not necessary for me to swear; when I pass my word, it's law. But now, mark me, you must make me a promise."
 "It is no more than fair that I should."
 "And you will keep your promise?"
 "Yes, I will keep my promise."
 "You swear?"
 "No, I will not swear; my word, like yours, is good."

"All right. Now, I wish you to promise me that you will not spend one cent in my behalf; the money would only be thrown away."
 "I am sorry you compel me to make that promise."

"You would only spend your money and do me no good. I tell you all the lawyers in the world can not save me; unfortunately, the evidence is dead against me, and yet I am as innocent as yourself."

At this moment there came a rap at the door, and the young people saw that the turnkey had come to lead the visitor away.

"Remember your promise," said Jack.
 "I will, and you will remember yours?"
 "I will."

The young girl was led away.

Late in the afternoon a second visitor was shown into Jack's cell; the new-comer was a veiled lady also, and Jack concluded that Marian had returned; but he was greatly surprised when the second visitor spoke. The voice was rich, melodious, and sympathetic, but it was not the voice of Marian.

"Well, you are in a bad scrape," said the visitor.

"Yes, I am in great trouble."

"What are you going to do?"

"Who asks the question?"

"Do you not recognize my voice?"

"I do not."

"I will show you my face, but you must not betray any surprise or pronounce my name."

A weird suspicion shot through Jack's mind. The visitor removed her veil, and Jack was on the point of uttering an exclamation of surprise, but a warning hand was raised, and he remained silent. His visitor was the beautiful queen of the confidence men, the woman whom he had rescued from the officer, and by that act had formed a link in the chain of evidence against him.

"You are surprised to see me here?"

"I am indeed."

"You did me a great favor once. I see in reading the evidence that the favor you performed for me has turned against you in this case."

"Yes; but I do not regret the service I did you."

"Are you innocent or guilty?"

"I am innocent."

"You did not tell your story in court?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I had told it two or three times, and my narrative only excited laughter and derision."

"Tell me your story."

Jack repeated the story as he had told it to Marian.

When he had concluded, Belle Bryan said:

"Describe the man's appearance who hired you to carry the trunk."

Jack described the man's appearance accurately.

"He is a mean rascal!" muttered Belle Bryan, meditatively.

"I wish I had him in my clutches just two minutes!" said Jack, and he clutched his muscular fingers around the throat of an imaginary foe.

"The case is dead against you!"

"Yes."

"No lawyer could get you out of this snag, that's certain."

"I could not employ a lawyer."

"You have no money?"

"Not a cent or a friend in the world!"

"You may not have any money, but you have a friend."

"Yes, one."

"Who is your friend?"

"A person whom I met here in New York."

"What is his name?"

"I can not tell his name."

A strange impulse led Jack to conceal the identity of his friend.

"Can your friend do anything for you?"

"No."

"Well, I am your friend, and I will do something for you."

"What can you do?"

"I don't know yet, but I'll get you out of this scrape, if it costs me my life."

"You are very kind, but I do not believe you can do anything for me."

"That is because you do not know me. I could get you all the lawyers you might need, but I do not think a lawyer can do you any good; the case is too positive and dead against you; but you shall not go to jail."

"What can you do?"

"I must have time to think the matter over; but you make up your mind that you are not going up the river. I've taken a fancy to you, and I'll save you: and when I say that much it means something. In the meantime, you make yourself comfortable here. It will be some time before your trial comes off, and we will have plenty of time to lay our plans."

The girl drew from her pocket a roll of bills, and extending them toward Jack, said:

"Here, you take this money and fix the keepers, and send for all the comforts you need."

"I can not take any money," said Jack.

"You can not take any money?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I do not need it."

"Bah! you want something besides prison fare."

"No; the food I get is good enough for me."

"But you want to fix the keepers."

"The keepers treat me well enough."

"You are easily pleased; but you must take the money, all the same."

"No, I will not take it."

A flush mounted his visitor's face as she said:

"Do you mean you will not take it from me?"

"I have refused money from my other friend."

"I care not for your other friend; you must take the money."

"I will not."

"Take it as a loan."

"How could I ever pay it?"

"One word, Jack Gameway; do you think I am offering you stolen money?"

The young man could not tell a lie, and he made no answer.

"I will swear the money is honestly mine. I have plenty of money; I will not miss it if you never pay me."

"I can not take it."

"As you please. And now, what do you intend to do?"

"What can I do?"

"Have you any plan?"

"No."

"And do you mean to quietly submit and go to prison?"

"I can do nothing to save myself!"

"You are a man of courage?"

"I am no coward."

"You are young, too young to be sent to jail for fifteen or twenty years."

"I will never go to State Prison!"

"Ah! then you have a plan?"

"Yes."

"What is your plan?"

"There is a way out."

"I am your friend, tell me your chance."

"I'll die before I'll go to prison for ten years!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE beautiful woman laughed in a pleasant manner and said:

"Nonsense!"

"I mean what I say!"

"You mean you will kill yourself?"

"Yes."

"Go out of this bright world at your age?"

There was a tone of railery in the woman's voice, and in the same tone Jack answered:

"My prospects are really so bright, it does seem ridiculous."

"Young man, listen to me! You have something more precious than your freedom!"

"And what is that, pray?"

"Your honor and innocence! I am a bad woman, I am a fugitive! detectives are keeping me under surveillance every moment of my life, but I respect your honor and unusual integrity. I would weep to see so good a man driven to crime, and bad as I am it is my purpose to save

you, and do not permit me to hear any more such foolish talk about suicide!"

"Are you really a criminal?"

"I might as well be; I am called a criminal, and I am persecuted just the same as though I were really guilty."

"And are you innocent?"

"We will not talk of my affairs now. I have made up my mind to save you, and I am going to do it!"

"I do not think it possible to save me. I have calmly thought my case over, and I do not see a living chance."

"I have a plan."

"What is your plan?"

"I know the man who hired you to carry the trunk."

"Do you suppose he would come forward and save me by a confession?"

"No; but if he were once trailed down and good for a send-up he might tell the truth and exonerate you."

"And what is your plan?"

"I will put a detective on his track, and when he is caught something may be done; so you see your case is not as hopeless as you think."

"You are a noble woman!"

"No; I am not a noble woman, but you did me a service, and I shall not be satisfied until I have done you a service in repayment. And now, as you have a chance to escape, I can expect that you will dismiss all idea of making away with yourself, or at least you will promise to wait and see what can be done!"

Jack had already made one promise to that effect, and he willingly assured Belle Bryan that he would wait.

A few moments passed, and the step of the keeper was heard.

The woman dropped the veil over her face, and said:

"You must not let any one know that I came to see you."

"You may depend upon me."

An instant later the keeper opened the cell door and announced that time was up.

Belle Bryan rose and followed the turnkey out.

"Any chance for your friend?" he asked.

The woman slipped a twenty-dollar bill into the keeper's hand, and said:

"Look well to his comfort."

"Oh, never fear; he's a nice young fellow, and I've taken a great fancy to him. I'll see he's well taken care of, you can depend."

When alone, Jack sat and thought over the strange incidents of the day. He had entered that cell, as he supposed, a friendless man; but within a few hours he had learned that he had two friends who would go any lengths to serve him—and, strange enough, both these new-found friends were beautiful young women.

About half an hour after the departure of his last visitor the keeper appeared at his cell door, bearing quite a number of little delicacies.

"I say, young fellow, I've brought you something to feed on, and I've brought you a few books to read, and the daily papers. Now, you just make yourself as comfortable as you can, and I reckon it will come out all right for you in a few days."

Jack thanked the keeper, and recognized to whom he owed thanks for the little attentions he was receiving.

About half an hour subsequent to the interview which took place in Jack's cell, a noted detective was strolling up Broadway when he felt a light touch upon his arm. He turned and recognized that the touch had come from a veiled lady who stood at his side.

The detective, who was none other than Phil Tremaine, the famous Gypsy Detective, was not at all abashed. It was not an unusual incident for him to be addressed by a veiled lady.

"Well, what's up?" he inquired.

From the manner of the veiled woman he quickly discovered that she was no timid novice.

"Are you busy?"

"Not just at present."

"Can you spare me a few moments?"

"Who are you?"

"Take a walk and I'll tell you."

"You're a cool 'un; where will you go?"

"We'll drop in at the Central."

"All right, I'm with you."

The Central was a little hotel which had assumed the name of a more grand hostelry.

As they walked along a few words were exchanged, and the veiled lady led the way to the hotel named. She appeared to be at home there, as she proceeded direct to a private sitting-room and closed and locked the door.

"Now, then, sis," said the old-time detective in his off-hand manner, "up with your veil!"

The woman raised her veil and disclosed the beautiful face of Belle Bryan, the so-called "Queen of the Confidence Men."

"Halloo!" ejaculated the gypsy; "so you are the party, eh?"

"Yes."

"I am sorry you brought me here, Belle."

"Why?"

"I've a warrant in my pocket for you."

The woman smiled bitterly, as she said:

"That is not strange."

"Have you brought me here to surrender yourself?"

"No; and you will not take advantage of my present business to arrest me."

"I won't, eh?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I know you."

"Do you?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"I have thrown myself into your hands; I have put trust in you, and Gypsy Tremaine is not the man to take advantage of the circumstances."

"I am compelled to do my duty, Belle."

"You will first hear my story?"

"Sail in."

"You heard of the arrest of a young fellow who was caught carrying a trunk full of 'swag' from Meyer's jewelry store."

"Yes; I read about the case."

"The young man who was arrested is as innocent of that robbery as I am."

The detective smiled, and said:

"That's good."

"Well, as you are."

"That will do."

"The case is dead against him."

"Is it?"

"Yes."

"That's bad for him."

"But he is innocent."

"Yes, all those fellows are innocent."

"Phil Tremaine, I know you are a just and kind man."

"Thank you. Go on."

"I want to establish that young man's innocence."

"Who is he, Belle?"

"I wish to ask a favor of you."

"All right."

"Go and see him, and then come and talk to me. Let him tell you his own story."

CHAPTER XIV.

"WHERE is he, Belle?" asked the detective.

"In the Tombs."

"What is your interest in this young man?"

"He did me a service."

"Ah, I remember now; he snatched you away from an officer—yes. He is one of your pals, eh, and you have the impudence to come here and ask me to aid in getting him clear of justice?"

"I have done no such thing."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Establish his innocence."

"And suppose he is not innocent?"

"Then let him suffer the consequences of his crimes."

"That's fair. But how about you, Belle? I've a warrant for you."

"Burn it up."

"That will not do."

"Go and see the young man."

"It's too late to get into the Tombs to-night."

"Not for you. I know you can get in there any time."

"And you want me to go and see this young man?"

"Yes."

"And then?"

"If you are not as deeply interested in him as I am, you can serve your warrant on me and let him take his chances."

"And when shall I see you?"

"To-night."

"Where?"

"Here."

"At what hour?"

"At any hour you name."

"I will be here at nine o'clock. I am somewhat interested in this case already, as it's a little out of the usual line."

"You will be more interested after you have seen the young man in the Tombs."

"All right; I will go and see him. And now, Belle, a word about yourself."

"What about me?"

"Why don't you turn over a new leaf?"

A bitter smile played over the girl's face as she answered:

"You have a warrant for me?"

"Yes."

"On what charge?"

"A sneak-thief slipped a roll of bills down in one of the banks."

"Well?"

"He has been identified as an old pal of yours."

"And on the strength of that a warrant has been issued for my arrest?"

"Yes."

"Gypsy Tremaine, do you know I am one of the worst persecuted women on the face of the earth?"

"You have only yourself to thank."

"You think so?"

"Yes."

"Phil Tremaine, listen to me: as sure as you are sitting on that chair, I never committed a crime in all my life."

The beautiful woman spoke in a tragic tone of voice, and her eyes gleamed and her bosom swelled with deep emotion.

The detective shook his head.

"You do not believe it?"

"Belle, I know better."

"What do you know?"

"I know that although you may not have actually committed the crime yourself, you have been a party to a great many crimes."

"You know that to be a fact?"

"Yes, I do."

"Of your own knowledge?"

"Yes."

"Phil Tremaine, I've a great surprise in store for you."

"It will be a great surprise if you prove to me that you are an innocent woman."

"I am an innocent woman."

"And you never consorted with criminals?"

"I never did."

"That settles the whole business. There is no great surprise in store for me."

"You do not think it possible that I can be innocent?"

"I know it is not possible. I know of crimes in which you were engaged, and once I 'piped' you when you worked a game right under my own eyes."

"Right under your own eyes?"

"Yes."

"You can swear it was I?"

"Yes."

"All right; your surprise will be all the greater when I see fit to open your eyes."

"I am surprised now, Belle."

"At what?"

"That you would for a moment think that you could fool an old hand like me."

"We shall see. But now we have other business in hand; there is an innocent and true young man in jail. We must get him out. We must set him free."

"If he is not better able to prove his innocence than you are, Belle, I am afraid there is but a poor chance for him."

"We shall see. You will visit him?"

"Yes."

"At once?"

"Yes."

"And you will meet me here at nine o'clock?"

"I will; but remember, Belle, if you are putting up any job on me it will go hard with you. I know you are a very beautiful woman, and know your power and influence in certain directions; but don't attempt to play any game on me!"

"Phil Tremaine, in calling you into this case, I have done you honor, and some day you will admit it. I've a strange and startling story to tell you when the time comes; and, despite what you have seen and what you have heard, and all that you think you know, I will prove to your entire satisfaction that I am an innocent and abused woman—as innocent, in one respect, as a babe unborn!"

"Do you mean what you are saying, Belle?"

"Yes, I do."

"All right. I have known strange things to happen, and I have been witness to some strange developments in my time; but, if you establish to me that you are an innocent and abused woman, I will call it the strangest and most thrilling of all!"

"All right; we shall see. Now go and visit the young man."

"What is his name?"

"Jack Gamespace."

The detective parted from the queen of the confidence men, and proceeded direct toward the Tombs, and, as he walked along the street, he muttered to himself:

"I wonder what strange freak Belle has got in her head now? She's up to some game, that's certain; but I'll see the thing through, if I don't you may shoot me!"

The Gypsy Detective had but little difficulty in gaining admission into the prison, and he was shown into Jack's cell; as he entered he glanced over the young man, and demanded:

"Halloo, young fellow! what are you doing here?"

Phil Tremaine was surprised. He was a man of large experience. He knew a criminal at a glance, even though it were one of the most angelic-faced fellows who ever assumed a sweet and bland smile.

Jack in turn glanced over the detective, and retorted by asking:

"Who are you, and what are you doing here?"

"My question is in first, young man; and when you have answered my question I will answer yours."

"That's fair," said Jack.

"Yes, that's fair, you're right."

"Well, I'm here for robbing a jewelry store."

"And did you rob it?"

"No."

"That's plump!"

"That's the truth."

"Well, I guess it is; and now tell me all about it."

"You have not answered my question."

"That's so. Well, I'm a friend of yours."

"A friend of mine?"

"Yes."

"I never saw you before to-night in all my life."

"That's so; but I'm a friend of yours all the same, and you'll find it out before you are many days older."

CHAPTER XV.

"You talk like a square man," said Jack, and he extended his hand.

The Gypsy grasped the youth's hand and said:

"I really like you, young man."

"Thank you; and I must say for a fellow who came on to New York penniless and friendless I've found quite a good number of friends, although I've been unlucky otherwise. But you have not told me your name."

"My name is Tremaine."

"Thank you."

"That's all right; and now, my lad, I want you to tell me your history. Commence at the beginning and go straight through. I desire to know all about you."

Jack proceeded and told his story, going into all the details of his history, including his first experience in New York and all his subsequent adventures.

When he had concluded his narrative the detective said:

"Well, you have met with hard luck."

"Yes, sir, I have."

"But, after all, young man, your hard luck may prove the most fortunate experience of your life."

"I can not see how, sir."

"That may be; but I have lived longer than you, and I have had more experience, and I can see further; and now I've a word to say to you. I'm going to get you out of this scrape."

"Can you do it, sir?"

"Well, when I start in to do a thing I generally succeed. Matters look pretty blue; the chances as they 'open up' are dead against you; but it will all come out right in the end."

"You can prove my innocence?"

"In good time—yes; but possibly not right away."

Jack's face fell, and he said:

"Then must I go up for a time?"

"Not for a day! No, no, we'll fix that!"

"How?"

"Well, I must have time to think matters over; but in the meantime you must not repeat anything I have said to you."

"You can rely upon me."

"That's all right. I'm not much of a talker, but somehow I've made more advance promises to you than I ever made before; but it's all

right. Answer me a question: what is your idea of Belle Bryan?"

"She is a mystery to me, sir."

"And yet she takes a wonderful interest in your fate."

"Yes, sir."

"She first called my attention to your case."

"She is very kind."

"An odd kind of a young woman for a notorious criminal."

"Do you know, sir, that I've an idea that she is not a criminal."

"That's because she is your friend."

"No, sir. I have watched her face. She does not look like a criminal."

"My dear boy, some of the worst criminals in New York to-day are the most innocent-looking people you can meet."

"I don't know anything about it, sir."

"Well, now answer me: do they make you comfortable here?"

"Yes, sir; ever since Belle Bryan was here."

"Ah, I see! And now, again: have any lawyers been to see you?"

"No, sir."

"They'll get the cue and come to-morrow; but you must not have anything to say to them."

"You can depend that I will not."

"I see you are a very resolute young fellow, and that you mean what you say when you speak, and one word of caution is enough to you."

"Yes, sir."

"You must not talk with any one."

"I will be as silent as a deaf and dumb grizzly."

"That's good; and now good-night. I will see you again to-morrow."

The detective left the prison, and at the appointed time was at the hotel to meet Belle Bryan. The strange, beautiful criminal was not on hand to make good her appointment, and the detective, after waiting an hour, started out, wondering what had become of her.

At the door he met Belle.

"Come in," she said.

He followed her into the house.

The woman was excited, deeply agitated, and appeared greatly exhausted.

"Oh," she murmured, "I can not stand this much longer!"

"What has occurred?"

"I came very near being arrested. I was followed by an officer, a mean fellow connected with some private agency; the man has caused me much trouble."

"I am sorry for you, Belle. Why do you not give up your old associations, leave New York, and change your course of life?"

"I will leave New York when I have accomplished my mission; and as to my associates, I have no associates."

"You still persist in declaring that you are an innocent woman?"

"I do."

"Would that I could believe your statement as true."

"You shall believe it. But did you visit the young man?"

"Yes."

"Well, what is your idea?"

"I am satisfied that he is an innocent man."

"He told you his story?"

"Yes."

"And you believe his statements?"

"I do."

"Well, some day you will believe mine; but now we must give our whole attention to his case."

"The chances are dead against him."

"Yes; and there is but one way to aid him."

"And what way would you suggest?"

"The arrest of the guilty man."

"Ah! you know who the guilty man is?"

"From his description of the man who hired him to carry the trunk, I think I can place him."

"Who is the man?"

"Dick Seeley."

"You know Seeley?"

"I have seen him."

"And yet you declare that you never have associated with these people!"

"And I repeat my declaration."

"And you suspect Seeley as the real burglar?"

"Yes."

"Do you think any one was in with him?"

"I can not tell."

"Now, what is your idea?"

"To catch Seeley."

"And then?"

"When he knows the chances are dead against him he can be induced to exonerate young Game-way."

"A good idea."

"You can secure Seeley?"

"I think I can. And now one word: what is your interest in this young man?"

"My only interest in him is that he is one of the most straightforward and brave young men I ever met—a real good-hearted fellow. He saw me in trouble and came to my rescue, and now I am going to do all that I can to get him out of trouble."

"Suppose Seeley has left the city?"

"That is what I fear."

"What will you do then?"

"Send for him."

"Who will pay the expense?"

"I will."

"Good; but suppose we fail to find him?"

"Then we must do something else."

"What would you suggest?"

"We will try and find Seeley first."

"Belle, you promised me a surprise?"

"Yes."

"When shall I be surprised?"

"When the time comes."

"I am ready now."

A moment the girl was silent, but at length she said:

"Now is as good a time as any."

CHAPTER XVI.

"YES," said the detective, in a meditative tone, "now is, indeed, as good a time as any."

"I would like to have you for a friend."

"You can make me your friend."

"How?"

"Prove that you are an innocent woman."

"I can do it."

"It will be a wonderful performance."

"I can do it."

"And then I can at once become your friend."

"I have often thought of appealing to you."

"It is never too late to carry out a good resolution."

"To-night I will convince you of my innocence; but first let me ask you what evidence you have against me?"

"The most positive a man can have."

"Will you name the facts?"

"I was trailing a certain well-known criminal, and one night I managed to get into a secret conclave of counterfeiters, and while there I saw a certain person."

"Who?"

"You."

A sad smile played over the face of Belle Bryan, as she said:

"Seeing me there was not evidence that I was one of them. I may have been there involuntarily."

"I will admit that, but I watched you and I saw that which made me understand that you were really one of them."

"Because I appeared to sympathize with and participate in their schemes?"

"Yes."

"What did you do while you were there?"

"You've got me on that point!" suddenly exclaimed the detective.

"While you were there you pretended to be one of them?"

"Yes."

"Perforce?"

"Yes."

"May I not have been acting also?"

"It is possible; but later on I was trailing a certain desperado, and I know that you aided him to escape me. Your action that time was voluntary."

"You saw and recognized me upon the latter occasion?"

"I did."

"Then there can be no doubt as to my criminality?"

The detective was silent.

"Silence gives consent," according to the adage."

"Belle," said the detective, "you are evidently seeking to get me on a string."

"I swear I am not."

"There is no better-known criminal in New York than Belle Bryan."

"And you doubt my power to convince you that I am an innocent woman?"

Again the detective was silent.

"Phil Tremaine, I told you I had a great surprise for you. I will prove my innocence."

"As I told you before, if you do, it will be

one of the most extraordinary surprises of my whole life."

"Go out and secure a carriage. I wish you to accompany me."

"Where will we go?"

"Place yourself under my guidance."

"You wish me to go with you blindly?"

"Yes."

A moment the detective was silent, but during his silence he fixed his calm keen eyes upon the lovely woman before him, and then he said:

"Am I not too old a bird to be snared? Dare you try this little scheme on me?"

"I intend no scheme."

"I am going with you, Belle Bryan. I never yet was known to back down. I want you to understand that; but I wish you to understand, also, that I go with my eyes open. I am not deceived."

"Yes, you are deceived."

"How?"

"You think I am seeking to lead you into a trap. You are mistaken."

"I hope I am."

"I have promised to prove to you that I am an innocent woman; I will make good my word."

"You may think yourself innocent, but can you prove yourself innocent before the law?"

"Yes, I can. Go and get a carriage, and to-night I will furnish you the greatest surprise of your life. Yes, I will prove to you, sir, that there are stranger things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in thy philosophy."

"I will go and get a carriage."

"Do so."

The detective went out. Half an hour passed, and he returned.

"I am ready," he said.

Belle Bryan had arrayed herself for the journey, and Phil Tremaine, at her suggestion, had adopted a disguise. The two were just passing from the room when at the threshold they were met by a rough-looking man.

"Halloo!" cried the latter, "I'm just in time!"

"Do you wish to see me?" asked Belle.

"Yes."

The detective stepped back into the room and was followed by Belle and the rough-looking man.

"Who is that fellow?"

"None of your business."

"Don't be sassy, miss."

"Name your business."

"You're in a hurry?"

"I am."

"I've a little 'billee doo' for you."

"A note?"

"No; a warrant."

"Are you an officer?"

"That's my calling."

"Let me see your authority."

"Never mind the authority, we'll come right down to business."

"Proceed."

"I ain't a bad fellow. I've had considerable trouble to run you down to this place, but you can fix things easy and I'm off."

"You want money?"

"That's the size of it."

"How much?"

"About a hundred."

"I have no money."

"Drop a 'glitter' in my hands and it's all right."

"I've nothing to give you."

"Then I must pull you in."

"You will arrest me?"

"Yes."

The Gypsy Detective stepped forward and said:

"I reckon, my friend, it's time for you to leave here."

"Oh, you do?"

"Yes."

"Who are you?"

"My name to you is 'Git.'"

The man drew a revolver from his pocket, coolly cocked it, and said:

"Are you inviting me to sail in?"

Quick as a flash Phil Tremaine drew a club, and the weapon was knocked from the man's hand; the thing was done so deftly and quickly that the man could but stand a moment and gaze in dazed astonishment.

"Who are you, anyhow?" he demanded, after an interval.

The Gypsy drew his own official badge from his pocket, and said:

"See this: my name, as I told you, to you, is 'Git.'"

"I git," said the fellow, as his eyes rested upon the silver emblem of a high special detective.

"Well," said the Gypsy, "he's off."

"Yes, and I have been hounded by that fellow."

"That fellow is a 'snide.'"

"I know it; and there are hundreds of them in this city."

"You're right; but we fixed that fellow anyhow."

"Now we will go."

The two proceeded down to the door. Not a public hack, but a private coupé with a pair of stylish horses awaited them.

"Are we to go in this carriage?"

"Yes."

"It is a private team."

"And yet a great many criminals have been drawn by that pair of steppers."

Without a word Belle Bryan entered the carriage.

CHAPTER XVII.

"You have not told me where you are going," said the detective.

"Let him drive to Hamilton Ferry."

Phil gave the order to his coachman, followed Belle into the carriage, and they were driven rapidly toward the ferry.

When they were crossing the river, the detective asked:

"Where do we go when we reach the Brooklyn side?"

Belle gave him the necessary directions.

"You are going to Greenwood?"

"Yes."

"One word, Belle. For your own sake, do not attempt any game. Remember, I am suspicious, and I am not to be taken unawares."

"You need not fear; I will make good my word and prove my innocence."

Phil Tremaine was greatly puzzled. He did not know what to think, and he kept revolving the matter in his mind, and at length a suspicion of her real purpose was suggested. The glimmer of a dark tragedy shadowed over his discerning vision.

"Belle," he said, "you are a wondrously handsome woman."

"Spare all your idle compliments, sir."

"My compliments are not idle. You are not only beautiful, but you are talented; and no matter how sinful your past life has been, you can commence even now and become a brilliant, happy, and honorable woman."

"Will you please keep your counsel until after I have vindicated myself?"

"It may be too late then."

"Wait and see."

"Frankly, Belle, do you mean any harm to me?"

"If you fear harm to yourself, order the driver to return."

"No, I do not fear harm to myself; and now, again, frankly, do you mean any harm to yourself?"

"Will I harm myself by furnishing proofs of my innocence?"

"No."

"Then be patient."

"Do you really hope to convince me of your innocence?"

"Yes."

"And you are going to Greenwood to do it?"

"Yes."

"Why to a cemetery?"

"Wait and see."

The carriage was driven very rapidly, and half an hour brought them to the rear of the great city of the dead.

"We will alight here. Bid your man wait for us."

"How long will we be gone?"

"Not over an hour. Come."

The night was very dark, but the strange queen of the confidence men led the way as though it were under a noonday sun.

The cemetery is surrounded by a high picket fence, and, as they drew near, she said:

"We will have to scale the fence."

"I reckon we can do that."

With a bitter laugh, the girl said:

"The darkness will cover the unlady-like act, as far as I am concerned."

They reached the fence and managed to climb over. Belle declined the proffered assistance of her companion.

We will here explain that it was well on toward midnight, and at such an hour a surrepti-

tious entrance was necessary, as no one is admitted after a certain hour.

The girl led the way, walking rapidly, and the detective followed in silence. At length the strange beautiful guide came to a halt at the entrance to one of a long row of vaults built in the side of a ridge.

"What are you going to do?"

"Enter the vault," said the girl.

"This is a dangerous proceeding," suggested the detective.

"Do you fear to follow where I lead?"

"Yes, I fear to do that which is unlawful."

"I swear to you I am doing nothing unlawful; see here."

The girl produced a key.

"Ah! you have a key to the vault?"

"Yes."

It took but a moment to open the outer door leading into the vault, and a second key served to open the inner door; as the latter swung back the strange girl produced a masked lantern.

"Ah, you have come prepared?"

"Yes."

They stepped within the vault, the doors were closed, and the woman removed her veil. Her face was pale, and we are fain to admit that the color had forsaken the dark handsome face of the Gypsy also. He was not a coward, but the circumstances were strange, weird, and unusual, and he would have been more than human had he not yielded to just a little agitation.

The eyes of the detective rested upon a casket, and at a glance he saw that it had but recently been placed in position.

In a solemn voice the strange girl said:

"I promised to prove to you that I am an innocent woman?"

"Yes."

"I have taken an extraordinary method to do so?"

"Yes."

"You have been bothering your brain all this time to know why I brought you here?"

"Yes."

"You thought I intended possibly to kill myself?"

"Yes."

"I brought you here because this is the only place where I can prove to you that I am not the queen of the confidence men."

The girl stepped to the casket, and it took her but a moment to open it, as it was one of the latest style of patent metallic cloth-covered coffins. As the casket was opened and its cold marble-faced occupant revealed, the detective uttered a cry of astonishment, and he was more greatly agitated than ever before during his whole career. Yes, for once the Gypsy was knocked clean out, and he stood and gazed in silent amazement, paralyzed under a strange spell which held him speechless until the girl spoke. She pointed toward the calm beautiful face of the dead, and in a solemn voice demanded:

"Answer me; was it I that you saw in the haunt of the criminals, or was it the dead woman before you?"

The detective gazed, but remained silent. Indeed, he could not speak, and it was the most wonderful event of his whole wonderful experience.

The girl stood pointing to the dead, beautiful face, while her eyes were fixed on the detective, and after a moment she asked:

"Will you now declare that I am a guilty woman?"

"What mystery is here?" demanded the detective.

"No mystery."

The dead face was a perfect counterpart of the living face of Belle Bryan. Death had not destroyed the wonderful and fatal resemblance.

"Tell me," said the living girl, "are you still prepared to swear that you saw me in the haunts of the criminals?"

"I tell you, here is a wonderful mystery!"

"Have I not proved my innocence?"

"You have proven to me that it is possible that you are innocent."

"I swear I am innocent."

"And who is this?"

"That is the corpse of the dead queen of the confidence men."

"And her relation to you?"

"My sister—my twin sister."

"And why have you not vindicated yourself before?"

"She has been dead but two weeks."

"Under what circumstances did she die?"

"I do not know."

"What do you suspect?"

"Shall I tell you?"

"Yes."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A MOMENT the lovely Belle Bryan was silent, and her face displayed the deepest emotion, but at length she managed to articulate:

"I think she was murdered."

"By whom?"

"A rival—a jealous rival."

"Under what circumstances?"

"Poisoned."

"How comes it that one so beautiful should have become a criminal?"

"I have a terrible story to tell you; but first see here."

The strange girl handed the detective a photograph, and held the dark lantern so its light shone full upon it.

"This is the picture of the dead or the living?"

"The dead."

"How old was she when she died?"

"Twenty-three."

"This was taken some years ago?"

"Yes."

"Have you a picture of yourself?"

"Here."

The girl handed the detective a second photograph.

"There is a slight difference in your appearance, and yet the resemblance is wonderful."

"Yes."

"Tell me your story."

"Not now and here; we will go."

The two passed from the vault and had little difficulty in making their way back to the carriage, when they were driven to New York. Arriving at the house, the girl said:

"I will see you to-morrow, and you shall hear my strange narrative."

"Good-night," said Phil, "but before I go I must say one word."

"Speak."

"You have made good your declarations; you have given me the greatest surprise of my life."

"Do you believe I am innocent?"

"I believe in your innocence; good-night."

The detective entered his carriage and was driven away, and later on, when in his own elegant bachelor apartments, he sat thinking over the startling revelations of that night.

Upon the morning following the incidents we have described, the Gypsy Detective went to the Tombs and held a long interview with Jack Gamespace. He found our hero quite cheerful and hopeful, and during the interview Jack exclaimed:

"It's sort of a good thing to get into trouble after all, when a fellow who was absolutely friendless before finds so many ready and willing to serve him."

"You owe my interest in your behalf to Belle Bryan."

A shadow fell over the young man's face, and he said:

"It's a pity she is a wicked woman and a criminal! I think she is the most beautiful creature I ever saw, and her impulses all appear to be noble and generous."

"Possibly she is not as 'bad as she's painted,'" remarked the detective in a peculiar tone.

"Is she a good girl, and is the story I heard about her a lie?" eagerly inquired Jack.

"We will talk about that some other time; at present we must attend to your case."

The purpose of the detective's visit to the Tombs was to inquire particularly about the fellow who had induced Jack to carry the trunk.

Our old-time readers know that, next to Sleuth, Phil Tremaine is the most skillful and experienced detective in New York; and probably no man living has a better acquaintance with the identity and personality of criminals. It was the Gypsy's idea that the man had taken a "flit," but there was a possibility that he still lingered, and, if such were the case, the Gypsy was sure to nab him.

Belle Bryan had expressed it as her opinion that the real robber was Dick Seeley, a fellow whom the detective knew to be one of the most slippery rascals in the state, and his interview with Jack confirmed Belle's suspicion.

From the Tombs the Gypsy proceeded to the district attorney's office. Phil was intimately acquainted with that official. Proceeding to his private office, he said:

"I am going to get a lawyer to make a motion to admit one of your prisoners to bail."

"Which one?"
 "Young Gameway."
 "I'll want heavy bail for that fellow."
 "You will, eh?"
 "Yes."
 "On what ground?"
 "He is a most dangerous man—a young desperado who has come on here from the West, and I'm going to send him up sure—cut him off right at the beginning of his operations in New York; we've enough fellows like him around here already."
 "You've got his pedigree?"
 "Yes."
 "Who made out the report?"
 "Nickerson."
 "Ah, I see; the chap who made the arrest?"
 "Yes."
 "I'm sorry for Nickerson; he's a good officer and very ambitious; but he's made a mistake."
 "Made a mistake?"
 "Yes."
 "How?"
 "He has arrested an innocent man."
 "He has arrested an innocent man?"
 "Yes."
 "Who told you so?"
 "Phil Tremaine."

The last remark was a sort of settler; there was not a man in New York engaged in criminal prosecution who would dare go against the calm, positive opinion and judgment of the Gypsy Detective.

"Have you read over the testimony given at the examination?"
 "Yes."
 "Ain't that positive enough?"
 "Pretty positive, I'll admit; but still the young man is one of the most honest lads I've ever come across."
 "It's evident he's won your sympathies, Phil."
 "Yes, he has; and only because I know he is innocent."
 "Then you know the guilty man?"
 "I think I do."
 "Will you ask for Gameway's discharge?"
 "No; only I want him admitted to bail."
 "Who will go on his bonds?"
 "I will."

The district attorney looked surprised, and exclaimed:

"It is a tradition around here that you wouldn't go on a bail bond for your own brother."
 "I am going on the bail bond of Jack Gameway."
 "And the young fellow is really innocent?"
 "As innocent as you or I; and there is no doubt about it."
 "It's a curious case then?"
 "No; it's as plain as day."
 "He is a friend of that notorious woman Belle Bryan; and between you and me there is a chance to close up that dangerous woman's career!"

"What have you struck now?"
 "I think I've got her dead to rights at last."
 "Have you arrested her?"
 "No; but I am about to issue a warrant."
 "On what charge?"
 "Forgery."

"Who is the complainant?"
 The district attorney mentioned the name of a well-known millionaire, a man who bore an honored name, but was known as a great patron of all manner of sporting events, from a prize-fight to a walking-match.

"When was this forgery attempted?"
 "Within a week."
 "Was it actually committed?"
 "Yes."
 "Within a week?"
 "Yes."
 "How is the evidence?"
 "There is only one link lacking, and I've got the thing sure."

The detective sat with his eyes cast down, lost in deep thought, and the attorney said:

"I suppose you think she is innocent also?"
 "Well, I do," came the answer.

CHAPTER XIX.

"HAVE you lost your head, Phil?" demanded the attorney.
 "No."
 "And you declare Belle Bryan's innocence?"
 "Yes."
 "And you know nothing about the circumstances?"
 "I know something about Belle Bryan."

"What do you know?"
 "She can prove an *alibi*, no matter what your evidence may be; but I say this to you in confidence. So go slow; but do not give away what I have just told you."
 "Phil, I do not know what to make of you!"
 "I am generally pretty straight, I reckon."
 "And it's that which puzzles me now, when I hear you make such wild declarations."
 "Don't issue a warrant for Belle Bryan's arrest for a few days—not until you hear from me."
 "That is an odd request."
 "You will be glad, some day, that you took my advice."
 "A judge will issue the warrant."
 "That is all right. You keep your hands off; you're being 'played.'"
 "How?"
 "The complainant is working on an old charge, and this forgery charge is to be supplemented."
 "How did you discover that fact?"
 "That's my business; only I'm telling you if this man wants to arrest the girl, let him do it on a charge direct through a judge; do not let him play you through your pigeon-holes."
 "You must know what you're talking about, Phil."

"I do."
 The detective reached over and whispered a few words in the district attorney's ear. The latter exhibited considerable astonishment, and exclaimed:

"Do you know that to be a fact?"
 "I know it for a certainty."
 "Phew! but this is a strange state of affairs."
 "We'll let this thing run, and you will see some fun in a few days."
 "But one of my men saw Belle Bryan yesterday."

"Did he?"
 "Yes."
 "I'll bet you ten thousand dollars he did not; but the bet must not be proven until after she has been arrested."
 "I won't bet against Phil Tremaine; but it's all very strange."
 "I've had a good deal of experience, and it's the strangest romance that ever came to my knowledge; but I know I am right."

"That settles it."
 "Now about the young man, Gameway?"
 "You say you will go his bail?"
 "Really, but not seemingly; I will send a man up to bail him, and you must not object to him: I am the real security, and I'll execute the bonds."

"That's all right; when will you bring the matter up?"
 "In about two hours."
 "Have you seen the judge?"
 "I'll get you to fix that business; have him in court about half past twelve."
 "You are the only man in New York I would do this thing for, Phil."
 "Do it for me; I am on the side of right; you know I would be the last man to let a criminal go free."

"I know that, and I'll do it."
 At the hour named Jack Gameway was brought into court; the motion was made to admit him to bail; the district attorney offered no objection. A man stepped forward and went on the bonds and Jack was free.

The detective was at his side.
 "Come!" he said to our hero.
 "Are you going to take me back to jail?"
 "No, my dear, you are not going to jail, you are going with me."

The young man had not understood the proceedings, and gazed in amazement.
 "Come along," said Phil.
 Jack followed the detective from the court. Once outside, Phil said:
 "Jack, I have taken a great interest in you. I am your friend, and I am going to see that you get a good send off. I am a queer fellow, and I do not like ifs nor ands, so what I tell you to do you must assent to without a word, or we quarrel."

"I do not wish to quarrel with you, sir."
 "If you do just as I tell you, it will be all right; and now I want you to come and get a decent suit of clothes on your back."
 "I have no money, sir, to buy any clothes."
 "Here, no kicking; I did not ask you if you had money."
 "How can I get clothes without money?"
 "I will get them for you."
 "I am much obliged; but—"

"Do you wish to go back to jail, and forfeit my friendship?"

"No."
 "Then not a word. Listen: you are not free—you are only out on bail; you have not been tried, and you may be arrested at any moment."

Jack turned pale.
 "It's all right if you will do just as I say, and you will never go to jail again; but if you 'kick,' I tell you I'll drop you."

"I'll do just as you say."
 "All right. Now, then, let me tell you that, in order to save you, it's necessary to catch the real burglar."

"I'd like to catch him, and have him in my grip about five minutes!"
 "What would you do?"

"I'd leave him with the impression that he had been having a scrimmage with a grizzly bear."

The detective smiled as he watched the fierce light in the eyes of the young man from the West, and he made up his mind that Dick Seeley would indeed get a shaking up if Jack once got a chance at him.

Phil took the youth to a well-known ready-made clothing establishment, and, a couple of hours later, our hero had been transformed into a really handsome and gentlemanly looking young man; and, what was most remarkable, Jack did not betray any awkwardness or ungainliness in his new toggery.

Phil took the youth to his own home and gave him to understand that he was to abide with him for the time being.

"To-night," said Phil, "we will take a little tour around and see if we can get on the trail of Seeley."

"And I am to aid you?"
 "Yes; you are to aid as my decoy duck."
 The youth appeared pleased.
 "Am I to stay here all day?"

"No."
 "Can I take a stroll?"
 "Yes; but you must be careful and keep to yourself, and not get embroiled in any scrimmages."

"I have had a little experience," answered Jack.
 "You won't engage yourself to carry any more trunks?" said the detective, laughingly.

"You bet—not!"
 "All right; I reckon you will get along; be here by dark."

"Yes, sir."
 Jack started out and made straight for the shop where the lovely girl, Marian Blair, had bid him come, and where he was to have gone on the very morning when he was lodged in the Tombs.

Jack, as he walked along, was quite happy; he seemed to himself to be a sort of second Aladdin in big luck; what had been a misfortune appeared destined to prove his best good fortune, after all.

While Jack was walking down toward the shop where his little friend was employed, the Gypsy went to call upon Belle Bryan.

CHAPTER XX.

THE Gypsy found Belle Bryan awaiting him, and as the former glanced upon her fair face he wondered how he could ever have believed her a guilty woman.

Belle Bryan, as we have called her thus far in our narrative, was indeed a beautiful woman, and she had just reached that age when all the charms of lovely womanhood are at their best.

"I was waiting for you," said Belle.
 "I am behind time?"
 "Yes."
 "I was busy attending to our protégé."
 "You have seen him to-day?"
 "I have but just left him."
 "Is he more hopeful and cheerful?"
 "Oh, he is full of hopefulness, and as cheerful as a bird singing its matin song."

"He is a singularly frank and noble young man."

"He is what we may well call one of nature's noblemen."

"And in these days when the world is so full of selfishness and insincerity, it is indeed pleasant to meet with such a character."
 "You are right."
 The detective spoke with great earnestness, and a shadow fell over his handsome face. Phil Tremaine had experienced lessons in selfishness and ingratitude that would have turned a naturally less noble man into a bitter misanthrope.

He had in his time performed acts of self-denial that were heroic, and every time his good deeds had returned to him leavened with the bitter ashes of ingratitude. He was, however, still noble, self-denying, and generous, and he had reached that happy position from whence he could take humanity for "just what it was worth" without bitterness or regret.

At the time we write, the Gypsy Detective was forty. He was still a strangely handsome man, and a bachelor. Twice during his career he had indulged two really serious attachments, and each time, through some adverse fate, he had encountered disappointment, and he had determined to travel the balance of life's road in single harness.

"Have you taken any step to secure Jack's release?" asked Belle.

"He is free!"

"Free?"

"Yes; out on bail."

"Alas! that is but letting a caged bird stretch his wings around a room. He will soon be put in prison again, brought to trial, and convicted, for the evidence appears to be very positive."

"You need not fear; I will look out for him. To-night I set in to capture Dick Seeley. Jack will act as my aid. And now you will recall what business brought me here to see you."

"You came to tell me about Jack?"

"No; I came to listen to your story."

"Did I promise to tell you my story?"

"You did."

A shadow fell over the face of Belle Bryan as she said:

"My tale is sad indeed!"

"When I hear your story I have a startling announcement to make."

"I can anticipate your announcement."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Do so."

"I am to be arrested on a serious charge?"

"Indeed, yes; have you received information?"

"No; but an enemy has pierced my mask, and has awakened to his own danger. On what charge am I to be arrested?"

"From that quarter have you reason to expect an arrest?"

"My enemy is a man named Foster."

"That is not the name of the man who makes the charge against you."

"His name, I suppose, is August Meyer?"

"Yes; Gus Meyer is the man who is plotting against you."

"When you hear my story you will understand how he is not the real instigator of the charge."

"I am anxious to hear your story at once."

"My father was a German, the son of a wealthy merchant and large land-owner in his native land. My father's name was Meyer—Philip Meyer. He was a student at Heidelberg, became involved in a duel, and killed his antagonist, and became a fugitive. He roamed around the world, and at length came to America. He was a poor man, and believed himself to have been cast off by his family. He had two elder brothers, whom, he understood, inherited between them his father's estate. At the time he reached America he had not heard from his family for twenty years. He wrote to his brothers, and his letters were not answered. He became satisfied that his relatives wished to believe him dead, and he never again sought to communicate with them."

"At the age of forty he married an accomplished American lady, and at the time held a position as bookkeeper in a large manufacturing establishment in the interior of this state, and, while thus engaged, made the acquaintance of a country lawyer—a shrewd, sinister, wicked man. To this lawyer he told his story, and placed in his keeping many papers. My father became greatly attached to this man Foster, who was a cunning and insinuating schemer, and during their many talks and long association my father made the lawyer acquainted with every incident of his life."

"After I and my sister were born, my mother's health began to fail, and when we were two years old she died, and my father killed himself over her dead body. Father was alone with mother at the last moment, and when the room was entered the poor man was found lying across the dead body of his wife, with a bullet through his brain. He was an impulsive, affectionate, and passionate man, and momentarily crazed by his affliction, he had killed himself."

The detective was an absorbed and interested listener to the strange narrative. He had listened

to many strange, weird life histories in his time, and he was fully prepared to believe all the incidents that were being related to him at that moment.

"After my father's death it was discovered that he had died penniless. He was an extravagant man in his habits, as far as his income was concerned, and his little effects but served to pay the funeral expenses and his debts."

"Mr. Foster, the lawyer, had been regularly and legally appointed guardian and trustee of the two children; and he, after administering upon the estate, brought us children to New York and placed us in an orphan asylum."

"The old, old story," muttered the detective.

"The strangest part of my narrative is yet to be told," said the lovely narrator.

"Proceed."

"We were pretty children, and were, after a few years, adopted out and cruelly separated."

"How old were you when you were separated?"

"We were nine. We had been in the asylum nearly seven years."

"You were old enough to recollect each other?"

"Yes; and I remember both our little hearts were almost broken when the separation came—indeed, the manner of putting us apart was cruel and inhuman in the extreme. We were not even told that we were to be separated. My sister was selected and taken away, and only when I missed her was I informed that she had gone never to return. For days, weeks, and months I mourned for her. Nights I would awaken from a troubled sleep, and she came not; but at length time healed the wound, and, as I grew older, a suspicion settled in my mind that my sister had died, and that they had told me a lie concerning her."

"A terrible experience!" muttered the detective.

"Alas, the more bitter experience is to come! Would that my suspicion had been correct—would that she had really died, and had never lived to become Belle Bryan, the queen of the confidence gang!"

CHAPTER XXI.

For a few moments the lovely narrator gave way to her deep emotions, and the detective walked to the other side of the room. He was deeply affected.

After an interval the girl resumed her narrative.

"About six months later I was adopted by an old couple living in the interior of the state, and as it turned out, I was exceedingly fortunate in having been adopted by the good people who took me to their home, as it proved they were childless and without near relatives in the world, and they made me as though I were their own daughter. I was sent to the best schools and provided with the best masters in every branch that serves to add to the accomplishments of a young lady of wealth."

"I lived happily with my adopted parents until the hour of their death. They died within a few weeks of each other, and after his death it was discovered that my adopted father was a far richer man than any one had supposed. When his will came to be opened it was discovered that his estate had been divided into three parts: one third was devised to me; one third part was devised to his distant relatives, and the remainder was bestowed in charity, save a sum set apart for the erection of that tomb which we visited in Greenwood Cemetery last night."

As the detective listened he was compelled to admit that all the features of his present adventure were indeed the most remarkable and peculiar of his life.

"I was just one-and-twenty at the time the will was made, and found myself the possessor of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars."

"The will was not disputed?"

"No; the devisor had provided that in case any of the legatees sought to break the terms of the will, that they should forfeit their whole interest in any of its provisions; the executor was a wise and just man, and to him was confided the duty of building the tomb which was to be placed in fee to me."

"There was not a protest against the proba-tion of the will?"

"No, sir; and now comes the strangest part of my experience. I had long wished to visit Europe, and I determined to carry out my desire; and after traveling around a great deal I settled in Germany, and one day I encountered

a strange adventure. I was visiting an old town and was passing with my maid through the street, when we encountered an old man, who the moment his eyes rested upon me grasped my hands, fixed his eyes upon my face, and gazed at me long and earnestly."

"I thought he was some harmless old mad-man, and I let him gaze to his heart's content, and it was some time before he spoke, when he said:

"'Come!'"

"I asked where he would take us."

"His only answer was 'come.'"

"I speak German fluently. I am fond of adventure, and not at all timorous, as you are aware, and I decided to accompany the strangely acting old man."

"He led us to quite an imposing house, opened the door, and guided us to the interior and to a large room, which in this country we would call the parlor. The old man's actions were very mysterious, and I expected quite an amusing termination to our adventure; but I was destined to encounter a great surprise."

The detective was becoming more and more deeply interested in the strange narrative. As a rule he could anticipate a story; but for once in his life he was all at sea; he could not even discern a glimmer of the final dénouement.

"In the room," continued the narrator, "was a picture over which hung a cloth. The old man removed the cloth, when a portrait was disclosed, and I and my maid both uttered exclamations of the wildest amazement."

"The old man watched our excitement; and when I turned to him for an explanation, he said:

"'You never sat for that picture?'"

"'No.'"

"'And yet it is a counterpart of your own face!'"

"Indeed, such was the fact. The likeness between that picture and myself was so striking that one would, at a glance, imagine it was a genuine portrait."

"'How old are you?' demanded the old man."

"'I am twenty-two.'"

"'Ah, yes; and that portrait was painted sixty years ago.'"

"I will not go into the details of my talk with the old man; but he told me a story which convinced me that the picture was a portrait of my own father's mother."

"Did you recollect your father?"

"No."

"You knew of his history?"

"No."

"Not at that time?"

"No. It was later on when I learned my father's story—learned who I really was, that I was enabled to determine the relationship between myself and the original of that painting."

"One word," interrupted the detective.

"What is your real name?"

"I bear the name of my adopted parents—Gertrude Gameway. My real name is Gertrude Meyer."

At the mention of the name Gertrude Gameway, the detective uttered an exclamation betraying more unguarded surprise than he had ever before displayed during his whole life. Indeed, it was some time before he recovered from his agitation.

"Gameway, Gameway!" he repeated.

"Yes."

"What strange mystery is this?"

"One mystery is explained."

"Your singular interest in the young man?"

"Yes."

"What do you suspect?"

"That he is the nephew of my benefactors. My dear father often spoke of a younger brother who had gone West, and from whom he had never heard. He said the family believed him dead, but that at times a feeling came over him that this brother or some of his representatives might still be living, and in his will he left one hundred thousand dollars to be held in trust for ten years, while inquiry should be set on foot to hear if any one by the name of Gameway could be found, and whose identity as an heir of the lost brother could be established. The sum named was independent of the other division of his property, and at the expiration of ten years, should it become void as to its original intent, it is to revert to me with accumulated interest."

"Well, this is a most wonderful tale indeed!"

"I have a still more remarkable tale to tell."

"Can it be possible that you have not finished this thrilling romance?"

"I have not; and let me tell you here, that when myself and my sister were put in the

orphan asylum by the man Foster, he did not enroll us under our real names, as it was his evident intention to destroy our identity; we were to be lost to our real selves as far as our family history was concerned, forever!"

"And this man who put you in the asylum still lives?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Right here in New York."

"What was his purpose in seeking to thus treat two penniless orphans?"

A strange look came in Gertrude's eyes as she said:

"He had learned that we were not two penniless orphans, but the heirs of a large estate, and his purpose was to rob us; and he succeeded!"

"Great Scott! what am I to hear now?" ejaculated the detective.

"The strangest scheme of robbery that was ever told," came the answer.

CHAPTER XXII.

"PROCEED with your story," said the Gypsy.

"I remained a year in Europe. A suspicion was running through my mind that there was some connection between myself and the original of the picture I had seen, and I determined to investigate my own previous history."

"Did you go to the orphan asylum to make inquiries?"

"I did, and at first I could gain no information; but one day an old employee called upon me, and when I promised her money, she told me that my real name was Gertrude Meyer, and that I had been placed in the asylum by a man named Foster."

"Did she tell you how she obtained her information?"

"Yes. She told me that she was matron of the ward in which I was placed, and that among our effects she found two little handkerchiefs on which were marked the two names Gerty and Minnie Meyer. Her suspicions were aroused. She knew we were entered under different names, and she determined to investigate. She had seen the gentleman who brought us to the asylum, and had heard the tale he told as to our identity, and she remembered his face; and once when he came to the asylum to inquire about us she followed him when he left, traced him to an office, and following up her investigations later on, discovered that his name was Foster, and that he came from a small town in the interior of the State of New York."

"This little fact illustrates," said the officer, "the value of keeping a memorandum of seemingly unimportant incidents."

"Yes; it so proved in this case. She gave me some other information, and I paid her well for her trouble and started for the little town in this state, and it was while on the train that a most startling incident occurred. I had been seated in a palace car when a man entered who came right to me and addressed me by the name of Belle."

"Phew!" ejaculated the detective.

"I had never seen the man before in all my life, and I considered his address as an intended insult."

"Do you not remember me?" he said.

"No, sir," I answered, "I never saw you before in all my life!"

"Is not your name Belle Bryan?"

"No, sir!"

"The gentleman appeared to be a sincere and kindly man, and when I said my name was not Belle Bryan, he said:

"You need not fear me, my child; I would not deliver you over to harm for all the world!"

"Sir," said I, "you are really seeking to insult me, or you are laboring under some great mistake!"

"I am not seeking to insult you, and it does not seem possible that I can be mistaken; but tell me, what is your name?"

"Gertrude Gameway."

"And can you establish your right to that name?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is your home?"

"I named the town where I had lived with my foster-father so many years."

"I must be mistaken, miss. But it is the most wonderful resemblance I ever encountered."

"Suddenly an idea flashed through my mind, and I asked:

"Have you ever met any one, sir, who resembles me?"

"Yes. I have met a young lady who resembles you in such a remarkable manner that it is hard for me to believe, even now, that you are not denying your own identity."

"I am not, sir. And what is the name of the lady who resembles me?"

"I do not know what her real name is, but she is known as Belle Bryan. I am a physician. I was called to attend her once, and my sympathies were aroused in her behalf."

"And the young lady lives in New York?"

"Yes."

"And I can find her?"

"Yes; as she is well known."

"The train came to a halt at that moment, and the gentleman bade me a hasty adieu and departed."

"That was the first intimation that you had that your sister was still living?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you then suspect her real character?"

"No; but I was greatly troubled, fearful lest she were not all that I might desire in a sister."

"Did you return at once to New York?"

"No. I wish I had, as I might have saved her."

"Proceed."

"I reached the town where I was born, and set about making inquiries. I found many people who remembered my father and my mother, and I learned their history—or, rather, much of their history—enough to satisfy me that I was honorably born. I had about finished my inquiries, when one day I went to the cemetery where my father and mother were buried, and I was standing near their graves when I heard a step, and a few moments later a very old and seedy-looking man appeared before me. The moment his eyes fell upon me he uttered a cry of astonishment, and at first seemed inclined to flee away. I spoke to him and he halted, but did not speak. He continued to gaze upon me with dilated eyes."

"I realized that there was some sort of recognition on the part of the old man, and I spoke to him in my kindest and most reassuring tones. At length he found voice and asked:

"What is your name?"

"Gertrude Meyer."

"I thought so!" he exclaimed, and asked, "where is your sister?"

"Ah, you knew my sister?"

"I knew your father and your mother well; I remember the night when you and your sister were born. I would have known you as your father's daughter wherever I had seen you; and now tell me, has justice been done you?"

"How do you mean?"

"You are rich; you wear fine clothes and diamonds?"

"Yes."

"They are your own?"

"Yes."

"And you came honestly and honorably by them?"

"Yes."

"You are rich?"

"Yes."

"I am glad then. Foster must have done you justice at last!"

"Ah! do you know Mr. Foster?"

"I was his clerk."

"And you knew my father?"

"I knew him well. I aided in the scheme to get the property, and I have been a miserable man ever since. The money Foster gave me I gave away to the Church; and had I known where to find you, I would have sought you out and confessed years ago. But, as Foster has done what is right, I am satisfied. It was a terrible thing to do."

"I saw that I had fallen upon a man who could tell all I wished to know; and I said to him:

"I do not know Mr. Foster. I have only heard of him as the executor of my father's will."

"And he has not done you justice?"

"He has not."

"Then he shall. Yes, yes, he shall!"

"I am really Gertrude Meyer?" I said.

"Oh, I know who you are; it is not necessary for you to tell me who you are. I knew your father well—and you are a perfect image of him. He was a handsome man. Yes, yes; I know who you are."

"Can you tell me my father's history?"

"I can; and his was a remarkable history, I tell you."

"Where do you live?"

"Over there."

"Can we not go to your house?"

"Yes. I live all alone. My wife and only child lie in this cemetery. We can go to my house."

"And you will tell me about my father?"

"I will tell you about your father and about Foster's villainy."

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONTINUING her story, Gertrude said:

"The old man led me to his home—a miserable place in the outskirts of the village."

"What is the old man's name?"

"Henry Gruber."

"Proceed."

"The old man procured me a seat and told me his story. He said he had once been a lawyer of good standing, but had taken to drink and became a miserable town nuisance, when a young man named Foster came to the place and set up as a lawyer. 'He found out that I knew more about law in one moment than he knew in an hour, and he took me as clerk and set to keep me from drink.'

"I had been with him a year when your father came to the town, and he and Foster became acquainted, and after your father's marriage he told his history to Foster. I overheard every word that passed. I had an idea that your father would be a rich man some day, and I laid around and made notes of all that passed between them, and so I heard your father's history."

Continuing, Gertrude said:

"He told me the history that I related to you; and I have since verified all his statements."

"But where does the man Foster come in?"

"Ah, I come to that now. I will not tell you in the old man's words, but relate the story in my own way. Mr. Foster secured all my father's papers. It appears he suspected that there was a fortune somewhere, and after putting myself and sister in the asylum he went to Germany and set to making inquiries. He did not have much trouble; but made a most wonderful discovery. All my father's family were dead, and a large fortune had been left in trust for my father or his heirs. The money was to be held so many years, and at the expiration of that time was to be disposed of as directed."

"Mr. Foster learned all these facts and cunningly set to work to carry out a scheme to secure the money. He called on the justice and represented himself as the guardian of one August Meyer, the son of the lost heir."

"The son of the lost heir?"

"Yes."

"Had your father a son?"

"No. Let me explain this man's deep and cunning game."

"Proceed."

"Foster told an ingenious story, and, as subsequently transpired, his statements were believed. In the first place he possessed an intimate knowledge of my father's previous history, presented photographs of my father which were recognized, and when he had arranged everything he returned to America and cast about to find a youth who resembled my father."

"Ah, I see!" ejaculated the detective.

"You know with all the world to choose from it is an easy thing to find a young man who would bear a sufficient resemblance to pass as my father's son; you know how often the trick has been played in regard to lost heirs to kingly thrones; notably the case of Mr. Williams, who it was claimed was the lost Prince Louis XVII., and who it was admitted bore a startling resemblance to Louis XVI. Mr. Foster succeeded in finding a young man whose resemblance to my father is simply wonderful."

"Have you seen the man?"

"Yes."

"And he really does resemble your father?"

"He resembles the photographs and portraits of my father, and, indeed, resembles me so closely that he might and will be accepted as my brother."

"This is indeed a strange story!"

"And it proved a successful scheme. Mr. Foster took the young man to Europe, proved him to be the heir, secured all the property, and returned to America a rich man."

"He had made an arrangement with the false heir?"

"Yes."

"And how about the man Henry Gruber?"

"He signed false documents, and testified before the German consul-general in this city, and aided in the scheme."

"And did he receive his share?"
 "He was well paid; but, as I told you, he gave his share away in charity—his conscience drove him to do so."
 "Is this old man living?"
 "Yes."
 "When did you see him last?"
 "About two months ago."
 "Has he a recollection of all the papers he signed?"
 "He has copies."
 "Good! we will know how to go to work."
 "Can that man be made to disgorge?"
 "Well, I think it would be strange if he could not. Yes, I will attend to him, and promise you your fortune. But now, tell me about your sister."
 "When I returned to the city I commenced a search for Belle Bryan; and, in searching for her, I became acquainted with many rough characters."
 "This explains one mystery."
 "How?"
 "It was a surprise to me that you should know the fellow Dick Seeley."
 "I have seen him often in my search for my sister. I sometimes took advantage of our wonderful resemblance to pass for her, and I have encountered very many strange adventures."
 "I should think you had. And did you find your sister?"
 "One day I met her accidentally. She sought to evade me, but I had come upon her too suddenly."
 "Do you mean to tell me that your sister sought to evade you?"
 "Yes."
 "This is strange."
 "It is a fact."
 "She knew of your existence?"
 "She learned of my existence after I commenced a search for her."
 "One would have thought she would have sought you."
 "It appears she learned all about me."
 "And still refused to meet you?"
 "Yes."
 "Why?"
 "Do not force me to tell you more than to say that shame was the impelling motive."
 "She was ashamed to meet you?"
 "Yes."
 "And was avoiding you all the time you were seeking her?"
 "Yes."
 "But at last you came upon her?"
 "Yes."
 "Proceed."
 "I induced her to go with me to my lodgings, and I got her to tell me her story. It was a sad, sad tale."
 "Why did you not keep her with you?"
 "She promised to return to me."
 "And she never did?"
 "She never did."
 "And did you never meet her again?"
 "Yes, once."
 "And then?"
 "She again evaded me."
 "Did Foster know of your sister's existence?"
 "Yes."
 "And the false heir?"
 "Yes."
 "Had they anything to do with her downfall?"
 "I believe that they had all to do with it."
 "And Foster now knows of your existence?"
 "Yes."
 "He does not suspect that you are the real queen of the confidence gang?"
 "No."
 "He knows you are the other sister?"
 "Yes."
 "And he is set to ruin you?"
 "Yes."
 "Well, well; I am on deck now, and Mr. Foster will have a nice time of it. But proceed and tell me your tale—tell me the history of your poor sister."

CHAPTER XXIV.

"It is a sad, sad tale I have to tell," said Gertrude.
 "I doubt it not; but now you have a friend in whom you can confide; tell me all without reserve. I only wish I had heard the story sooner."
 "I wish you had; but, alas, I fear all that could have been done would not have availed. And I sometimes think that after all it is perhaps better that my sister is dead."

An instant's silence followed; and a second time the beautiful Gertrude gave way to a fit of weeping. The detective waited until her emotion had subsided, when again he said:

"Come, tell me the story of your sister."
 "Not to-day."
 "Why not to-day?"
 "I am excited and weary. To-morrow I will tell the story."
 "As you please; but I have known a lost day to precipitate great disasters."
 "You fear what my enemy may accomplish?"
 "I do. He will resort to any desperate scheme to get you out of the way."
 "To-morrow I will tell you all."
 "All right. And now tell me, what do you suspect concerning our joint protégé Jack Game-way?"
 "I believe he is the lost heir, the nephew of my dear kind parents by adoption."
 "It would be a strange and romantic incident if such should prove to be the fact."
 "It would, indeed; but I have not the least doubt concerning the fact. The name is a peculiar one; and as I have told you, I heard my father speak of a younger brother who went out West many years ago; and the fact that one hundred thousand dollars was to be held for ten years is an indication of his belief in the possibility of some such *dénouement* as the appearance of Jack on the scene."
 "To-morrow, then, I shall hear the balance of your tale?"
 "Yes."
 "At what hour shall I meet you?"
 "Name the hour yourself."
 "Remember," said Phil Tremaine, "if anything occurs I have warned you."
 "In my case, one day can not make a great deal of difference."
 "I trust not. Good-day."
 Phil returned to his lodgings, expecting to find Jack; but the young man from the West was not on hand. As our readers will remember, Jack started down to find the shop where his fair friend Marian Blair was employed. He found the shop, and proceeding to the office, inquired for his friend.
 "She is not here to-day."
 "Is she sick?"
 "I do not know. She has not sent word to that effect."
 "Was she here yesterday?"
 "Yes."
 "And you do not know why she is not here to-day?"
 "No."
 Jack left the shop and proceeded to the female lodging apartment house where his friend resided. He entered the office and made inquiry, but received no satisfaction. The sharp-faced female in charge of the office showed very plainly that she was not disposed to give any information to a man.
 Jack again appeared on the street and was sauntering down the Bowery a few moments later, when he saw a man enter a low groggery, and there was something in the fellow's face which inclined our hero to suspect that he had seen the chap before.
 "I reckon I'll just take another look at that fellow!"
 Jack boldly entered the place. It was indeed a low place, and lolling around the room were a lot of the worst-looking characters he had ever beheld in one collection. Among the hard-looking crowd was the man whom Jack had started to trail.
 Jack stepped to the bar, ordered a ginger-ale, and fixed his eyes on his man, but could not place him, although the impression remained that he had seen the fellow somewhere. There was "a something" that struck him as being very familiar.
 While Jack stood stealing furtive glances at the man the fellow spoke, and it required all Jack's nerve to restrain himself from making an outcry. The youth, however, was an experienced hunter, and on the prairies and in the mountains he had learned to suppress his emotion at any sudden surprise, and he did refrain from betraying himself; but the instant he heard the fellow speak he placed him. He had fallen upon the track of the man who had hired him to carry the trunk.
 Jack had learned considerable from reading, and he at once discerned that the rascal was under cover—had changed his appearance—and our hero was only one in a thousand who would have detected the voice; and it was only his training as a hunter that enabled him to note

the resemblance which first attracted his attention.

Dick Seeley, as it proved, had "tumbled" to Jack's surveillance, and he fixed his own cunning eyes on our hero. Jack, however, had undergone a most wonderful transformation: his long hair had all been cut off, and indeed, as intimated in a preceding chapter, the transform from a Western prairie boy to a regular city smart-looking fellow had been complete; and Jack, who had become aware of the fact that the thief was studying him, became also convinced that the fellow had failed to identify him.

A moment Jack revolved the situation in his mind. He had already determined to hover over his man until an opportunity should offer for capturing him.

In the meantime, as subsequently appeared, the rogues had fixed their eyes on the young man from the West as a possible victim.

Jack showed himself in no hurry to leave the place, and one of the men crossed over and spoke to him.

"Didn't I meet you down in Wall Street the other day?" said the fellow.

"Mebbe you did," answered Jack.

"I thought so; your name is John Wiley?"

"No; my name is not John Wiley."

"Ah, I am mistaken."

"Yes."

"What is your name?"

"Thompson," answered Jack.

"Ah, yes, I remember; will you take a cigar?"

"Yes, thank you."

Jack was not a smoker, but he was quite anxious to get in with the men. He desired to make the acquaintance of the fellow who had hired him to carry the trunk.

The men were soon engaged in conversation, and Dick Seeley ventured to say:

"Your face is familiar to me, young fellow; but I can't recall just where I met you."

"Well, that's just why I'm watching you so close," said Jack. "It appears to me that I've seen you somewhere before."

"Where do you hang out?"

"Nowhere in particular. Where do you hang out?"

"Here a good deal. Were you ever in here before?"

"Not to my recollection."

"Well, I'm glad to make your acquaintance, anyhow."

"And I am glad to meet you," answered Jack.

Our young man from the West was becoming an apt scholar in the little game of hide-and-seek.

He spent the whole afternoon with the crowd and played his part well. They made several attempts to draw him into what is termed a "sucker game;" but Jack proved too many for them, and they finally concluded that he was too smart for them, and he was permitted to drop away, and at length he left the saloon.

Jack took all the bearings of the place and promised to call in again and see the keeper.

Meantime Phil, the Gypsy Detective, was becoming quite worried over the young man's prolonged stay, and he was on the point of starting out to look for him when Jack suddenly appeared.

The detective was delighted, and exclaimed:

"Come, young man, now give an account of yourself."

CHAPTER XXV.

Jack proceeded, and told of his meeting with Dick Seeley.

"You saw him?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

Jack related all the circumstances.

"Young man, you're a brick!" exclaimed the detective. "I couldn't have done better myself! And you didn't let on to him who you were?"

"No, sir."

"You did well. I had no idea of your meeting and recognizing him, or I should have warned you; but, as it has turned out, you acted just right. I would have feared that you would have pitched into him and mauled him."

"No, sir; I wasn't going to get into fresh trouble just yet."

"Well, whoever calls you a greenhorn don't know the lay of the land, that's all I've got to say! Jack, we'll capture that fellow to-night."

"That was my idea."

"We will get you up in your toggery, just as

you appeared when you first came to New York."

"We've got the clothes, but my hair is gone."

"Is it? What's this?"

The Gypsy held up a wig which looked as though it might have been made out of Jack's own locks. The young man donned it, and looked in the glass.

"Well, I swan!" he ejaculated; "that's me right back again, dead sure! Why, even that old grizzly I had a tussle with once would recognize me!"

"I've kept your old clothes."

"You have, eh? Well, I'll look as I used to was, just like a mice."

"We'll bait Mr. Seeley."

"Yes, sure; and then, I suppose, I can have a chance to give him a good whaling."

The detective proceeded to instruct Jack just how he was to act. Phil proposed to play a smart game on Monsieur Seeley. He understood his business well enough to know that the mere arrest of the fellow would not go far. He must have evidence, and the Gypsy was noted as an evidence obtainer.

Having instructed Jack thoroughly as to the part he was to play, the detective said:

"Jack, I want to have a talk with you about something else."

"Sail in, sir!"

"Have you any relatives?"

"I don't know, sir, of a relative I have in the world."

"What was your father's name?"

"John Martin Gameway."

A pleased smile passed over the detective's face.

"Where was your father born?"

"In Massachusetts."

"How long has he been dead?"

"About ten years."

"How long had he lived out West?"

"About thirty."

"Did you ever hear him speak of any relatives?"

"I was too young when he was killed to have remembered; but I've heard my mother say that it was possible that we had a few relatives, possibly down in Massachusetts."

"Have you any papers?"

"What do you mean?"

"Did your father leave any papers, any letters, from his relatives? Have you an old Bible or anything of that sort?"

"Yes, I've a whole box of letters and papers, and an old Bible."

"Did you ever look at any of the letters and papers?"

"No, sir."

"Where is the box?"

"I left it with an old friend of my fathers?"

"And do you think it is safe now?"

"I reckon so."

"Can you send and have the box brought here to New York?"

"I reckon I can."

"Do so at once."

"What is up? What do you want of the trash?"

"I will tell you afterward."

"I'd like to know now."

"Jack, I've taken a great fancy to you, and I'd like to put you along in the world. I've heard of a family by the name of Gameway, and it may be that they are relatives of yours, and they have lots of money."

"They can keep their money. Do you suppose I'd go and ask them to help me? No, sir! I've youth and health and strength, and I propose to make my own way in the world."

"That's right, my son; but when you are rich you'll like to call on some of your father's folks, and there is no harm in knowing where to find them."

"That's so."

"And you will send for the box?"

"I will do just as you direct; but tell me, who are the people you think are my relatives?"

"I will tell you all about it in a few days; our first duty is to get you out of the scrape you are in; remember you are only out on bail."

That same evening Jack Gameway, just as he appeared upon the morning when he first arrived in New York, entered the low groggery where he had at an earlier hour met Dick Seeley.

There were quite a number of men in the place, rough-looking characters of all descriptions. Jack went to the bar and called for a cheap cigar. It was given to him. At the same instant the young man heard an exclamation of

astonishment: he turned and beheld Dick Seeley the burglar, seated in the far end of the room.

Our hero did not look at the man as though he had ever seen him before, and upon getting the cigar, turned as though about to leave the place, but ere he reached the door a hand was laid upon his shoulder. Jack turned and recognized the burglar, but he did not permit the burglar to perceive that he had been recognized.

"Halloo, young fellow, where did you come from?" asked Dick.

"What's that your business?"

"Don't you recognize me?"

"No, I don't, and I've no desire to make your acquaintance."

"Oh, you haven't, eh?"

"No."

"And you never saw me before?"

"No, sir."

"I'm acquainted with you."

"That can't be."

"Oh, yes, I am; I knew you out West."

"Where out West?"

"The other side of St. Louis."

"If you ever saw me before it was a long distance the other side of St. Louis."

"Were you ever in Denver?"

"That's my business."

"You don't appear desirous of renewing old acquaintance."

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"That's my business."

The burglar approached close to Jack, and said:

"You're in trouble, Jack."

"Am I?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"Well, I know; and if you get off your high horse, I can be of some service to you."

"I am not asking services at the hands of strangers."

"I am not a stranger."

"I don't know you."

"Yes, you do."

"I ought to know."

"You would know me if I were to tell you who I am."

"Do so."

"Come into the little room there, and I will soon make myself known to you."

CHAPTER XXVI.

MATTERS were working nicely, but Jack was determined not to be too ready to give himself away.

"I don't see as I ever knew you, and that is enough."

"You will know me when I tell you who I am."

"Well, who are you?"

"Come in the back room and I will tell you."

"See here, my friend, do you think I'm a fool? You can't play any game on me."

"I don't wish to play any game on you. I tell you I can get you out of a scrape."

"What scrape am I in, sir?"

"Bah! don't I know you were in with a fellow on a burglary scheme? Come into the rear room there and talk matters over with me. I know who you are."

"You know who I am, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, who am I?"

"Oh, I know."

"What are you giving me, anyhow? Do you think you can poultice me and draw me out with guff?"

Since Jack had been knocking around New York he had picked up a number of slang phrases, and availed himself of his acquirement in talking to the fellow Dick Seeley.

"I don't want to draw you out for harm to yourself, but I tell you I know who you are."

"Well, who am I?"

"I've read the papers."

"You look like a chap who has spent his time in reading-rooms," said Jack.

"What's the use; come in the back room."

"Have you anything to say to me, old man?"

"Yes."

"Well, sing out your tenor."

"Come in the back room."

"On one condition; you say you know me; name my name and I will go in the back room with you."

"Your name is Jack."

"There are a good many Jacks around New York; mebbe your own name is Jack?"

"Your name is Jack Gameway."

Jack pretended to start and be very much surprised, and Seeley appeared greatly pleased.

"You see, I've got you down well."

"All right, I'll keep my word; come into the back room."

The two men entered the rear room. The little apartment was already occupied. A man lay on the floor in a drunken sleep, and a second miserable-looking tramp was stretched out on a bench—the latter also sound asleep.

Dick Seeley closed the door of the room and motioned Jack to take a seat at the opposite side of a rickety table, when he said:

"Now, then, Jack, tell me how you got out of jail?"

"Will you tell me how you come to know me, and know so much of my affairs?"

"That's easy enough."

"Well, tell me, please."

"I'm an old rounder."

"Yes, I should say you were."

"I'm always hanging around the courts, and sometimes in the station-houses. I was in the station-house when you were first pulled."

"Ah, you were?"

"Yes."

"And that's how you know me?"

"Yes."

Jack appeared to be satisfied with the explanation, when Seeley repeated his question:

"Come, now, tell me how you got out of jail?"

"Well, old man, that's my business. I did not come in here to give information; you were to put me up to some points."

"So I will, but I want you to answer my question first."

"Well, I'm out, that's sure."

"Yes."

"It don't matter much how it came about."

"Yes, it does."

"I can't see how."

"Well, I'm in to do you a service, Jack. I've taken an interest in you."

"I feel highly flattered."

"You would if you knew who I am."

"That might be, but as I do not know who you are, I ain't so flattered after all."

"You would like a friend in need?"

"Every man or boy appreciates a friend in need."

"I want to do a friendly act to you; now tell me, did you jump the cell or did some friend step forward and bail you?"

"A gentleman went bail for me."

"Did you know the man before you were in trouble?"

"No."

"And a stranger went bail for you?"

"Yes."

The burglar was thoughtful a moment; but at length asked:

"Why don't you 'skip'?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, why don't you get out of New York?"

"Forfeit my bail?"

"Yes."

"And leave the good gentleman to pay the money?"

"Yes."

"That is your advice?"

"Yes."

"And is that all you called me in here for?"

"Yes."

Jack fixed his eyes keenly on the burglar and said:

"You appear to know me pretty well?"

"Yes."

"You say you've seen me before?"

"Yes."

"See here," suddenly exclaimed Jack, "it rather strikes me that your face is familiar to me; not your face so much, but your voice."

Seeley turned a little pale, and rose as though about to go away, but Jack called:

"Sit down, I want to talk with you. I begin to think you're the man I'm looking for."

"Who are you looking for?"

"The man who engaged me to carry that trunk the night I was arrested."

"Did a man get you to carry a trunk?"

"Yes; he did."

"And you're looking for him, eh?"

"Yes."

"What good will it do you when you find him?"

"That fellow can get me out of this scrape."

"How?"

"He got me into it."

"How can he get you out of it?"

"He can come forward and swear I am innocent."

"He'd be mighty innocent to do it."

"See here," said Jack, "I know you now, you're my man!"

"Nonsense!"

"I swear you are the man! I thought your voice sounded familiar; I place you now!"

"You're crazy, young man!"

"No, I am not crazy. I tell you I know you!"

"And you think I am the man who got you to carry the trunk?"

"Yes, I do."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I am."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"Do you own up?"

The man laughed in a merry tone, and said:

"Yes, I do, Jack, I played you a nice trick."

"You did play me a nice trick; and now I want you to set me right."

"How can I set you right?"

"Come forward and tell the truth."

CHAPTER XXVII.

A MOMENT'S silence followed Jack's appeal. Seeley looked the young man over in a supercilious manner and laughed.

"Yes," repeated Jack, "I want you to tell the truth."

"Well, you are a cool 'un, young fellow."

"I want you to tell the truth," repeated Jack.

"Good clothes make you sassy."

Jack did not understand the man's allusion, as he was really got up as he originally appeared in New York. Our young hero, however, was quick-witted, and it came to him that the fellow had tumbled to the two identities.

"I want you to tell the truth," simply repeated Jack.

"And put myself in your place?"

"Yes."

"You must think I'm a fool."

"You must do it."

The man laughed and said:

"So you have been looking for me, eh?"

"Yes."

"Who set you to find me?"

"The judge."

"The judge?"

"Yes."

"He told you to find me?"

"Yes."

"Did he name me?"

"No."

"Did you?"

"No."

"Then what do you mean telling me any such story?"

"I told the truth to the judge, and he said to me, 'Find bail, young man, and then find the fellow who got you to carry the trunk; and when he corroborates your story I'll believe it.'"

Dick Seeley laughed out quite merrily.

"And you think I'm going forward to own up that I got you to carry the trunk?"

"You did get me to carry it."

"And don't you know why?"

"No."

"You're dumb, then, that's all. I got you to carry the trunk so that if any one was caught it would not be me!"

"You admit that much?"

"Yes, I do, certainly."

"And you admit I am innocent?"

"Certainly; but what odds does that make? I won't admit it in court."

"And you mean to let me suffer for your acts?"

"No need for you to suffer. You're out of jail, all you have to do is 'flit,' my boy; yes, 'skip,' you're a lucky dog anyhow."

It would be impossible to convey an idea of the tone and innocent manner of Jack as he deftly drew the above admissions from the burglar; in fact, Seeley was charmed by Jack's innocence and enjoyed being beguiled into the admissions.

"What is the use of my skipping? I'd only be captured and brought back, and I want something more than my freedom."

"What do you want more?"

"I wish to establish my innocence."

"You never can do that, sonny."

"I can with your aid."

Again the man Seeley laughed and said:

"Well, you are a sweet boy."

"Look here, old fellow, now come, honor bright, I went in to serve you!"

"I know you did for five dollars. I was giving you big pay for a small service, and you knew I couldn't pay that sum unless there was a reason."

"I ought to have known it."

"Certainly you had; and now you can't come and ask me to put my neck in the noose for you."

"But you ought to aid me all you can."

"What do you want me to do?"

"I want to establish my innocence, I told you."

"You can never do that."

"Oh, yes, I will."

"How?"

"Through you."

"Through me?"

"Yes."

"And you think I will go forward and proclaim myself the real robber?"

"Yes, I do."

Again the burglar laughed merrily and said: "Jack, you are the most simple fellow I ever met. I like you; it's refreshing to hear a man like you talk."

"Yes, I'm pretty simple and innocent, but I'm going to establish my innocence."

"Through me, eh?"

"Yes."

"You think you can persuade me?"

"Certainly I do; an innocent and simple fellow like me can do a great many things."

A sudden look of suspicion shot over Seeley's face. He said:

"So a simple, innocent fellow like you can do a great many things, eh?"

"Yes."

"What can you do?"

"I have made an appeal to you."

"Yes, you want me to make a fool of myself."

"I want you to do me justice."

There was a change in Jack's tone and manner, and a suspicion flashed over Seeley's mind that Jack might not be such an innocent chap after all. Seeley's manner changed, and he said:

"Look here, young fellow, don't you attempt to threaten me!"

"I have not threatened you yet."

"Well, just understand one thing."

"What am I to understand?"

"That you're a fool! And see here, I've only been having fun with you."

"You've only been having fun with me, eh?"

"Yes; and I've had fun enough, and I don't want to listen to any more of your foolish chat."

"You've had fun enough with me?"

"Yes."

"Do you think it was funny business to get me into this scrape?"

"I did not get you into any scrape. What are you talking about anyhow?"

"You didn't get me into any scrape, eh?"

"No."

"You are not the fellow who got me to carry the trunk?"

"Why, young man, you're crazy; go West."

"No; I am not going West. I came to New York to stay."

"You did, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, the chances are that you'll stay in the state fifteen or twenty years, sonny, unless you take a fool's advice."

"And what does a fool advise me to do?"

"Skip your bail."

"I ain't taking your advice."

"All right, do as you please; but see here, young fellow, I've played you; I never saw you before."

"You never did, eh?"

"Never."

"That's strange."

"Is it?"

"Yes; you recognized me easy enough when I first came in here."

"Just for fun, young fellow, just for fun!"

"But I did not come in here for fun," said Jack.

"You didn't?"

"No, sir."

"What brought you in here?"

"I knew you were here."

"Aha, you knew I was here?"

"Yes."

"You were tracking me?"

"Yes; I was simply tracking you."

Seeley's face became flushed with rage.

"You've been working a game on me?"

"Yes, I was just simple enough to work a game on you."

"What's your game?"

"I mean to put you in my place."

"You do, eh?"

"Yes."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DICK SEELEY glared at Jack in a malignant manner. Our hero's whole manner had changed.

"So you mean to put me in your place, eh?"

"Yes, I do."

"See here, young fellow, I gave you a bit of advice."

"Did you?"

"I did."

"Well, what was your admonition?"

"I told you not to threaten me."

"Seeley, you think I'm a simpleton?"

"I think you're a rogue!"

"Oh, you do?"

"Yes, hang it; you're in a scrape and you are going around to fix your burden on some other fellow's shoulders!"

"You're right, Seeley, the burden don't belong on my shoulders, and I'm going to shift it; yes, I'll put it just where it does belong!"

"Young man, I was disposed to be your friend, I humored you for fun."

"You humored me, eh?"

"Yes."

"How so?"

"I made you believe that I was the man who got you to carry the trunk."

"Yes; you made me believe so."

"All right; now listen to me: if you don't change your tone toward me I'll hurt you!"

"You will hurt me?"

"Yes."

"What will you do?"

"I'll lay you out!"

"You will?"

"Yes."

"Well, get to work, old man!"

Seeley struck at Jack, but the young man avoided the blow and dealt the burglar a stroke such as might have been dealt by a grizzly's paw.

Jack was a powerful young fellow, indeed, a perfect giant in strength, and there was a gratified look on his face as Seeley went down. Still the two men slept on, the noise had not appeared to disturb them.

Seeley leaped to his feet and drew a revolver, but it was snatched from his hand by one of the sleeping tramps who had most opportunely awakened.

"Halloo, old man, what were you going to do with the 'pop'?"

Seeley was just about to utter a cry for assistance from the adjoining room, when the tramp said:

"Hold on, Dick, don't call!"

"Who are you?"

"Don't you know me?"

"No."

"Well, it does seem as though recognitions were not flying around to-night; but, Dick, the boy's got you; he played you well."

"Played me?"

"Yes."

"I'll be hanged if I wouldn't like to know who you are!"

"I thought you were smarter, Dick; you've walked right into it."

The burglar turned pale; it began to glimmer in on his mind that he had indeed walked right into it; and again he essayed to utter a call, when the warning came:

"Don't holler, old man, it won't do you any good, and you may get hurt."

The second tramp had awakened and was taking a lively interest in the talk.

"What does all this mean?" demanded Seeley.

"It means that the simple, innocent lad whom you got to carry the trunk has 'countered' on you."

"And you are—"

"I am Phil Tremaine, the Gypsy. Do you want to holler now? And there's a friend of mine by the name of Wayne. He has been taking a little interest in the game."

"I'm a goner!" ejaculated Seeley.

"I reckon you've sized it, old man."

"It's a put-up job!"

"You're right again."

"You can't take me out of here, Tremaine."

"Oh, yes, I can, but I want a little talk with you first. You're gone and you know it, and now it's come down to a question of your

chances, and the latter depend upon how you behave now."

"I tell you this is a put-up job!"

"Certainly, it is a put-up job."

"I never saw that fool before. He's misled you when he says I'm the man."

"We didn't take any stock in what he said; we took our bearings from your own lips when you were amusing yourself with that simple and innocent young man. You enjoyed his simplicity and innocence to such a degree you gave up the whole business. So it's too late to crawl now, you may as well own up."

"You heard all that was said?"

"That's what we were here for, old man."

"And you took in all the taffy I was giving the boy?"

"Yes; but we are not taking any more sweets. We've got you 'dead to rights,' and you might as well come right down to business."

"Well, I have been played," moaned Seeley.

"Yes, sir; you have."

"I own up."

"Of course, you own up. I knew you would do that as soon as you took in the situation."

The man put out his hands for the "darbies." He knew indeed that it was no use to make "a kick," as the saying goes. The manacles were slipped on his hands, and as he looked toward Jack he said:

"Young man, you're in luck."

"Yes; it's time I had a little show. Luck has run against me until within the last few days; but it's taken a short turn, I reckon. An innocent lad as I am was in good luck in running the second time against a sharp fellow like you."

"You're all right now."

"I hope so."

"You ain't as simple as I thought you were, you were pretty cunning after all."

"Thank you, I've picked up a few points from the Injuns."

"I should say you had. I reckon it would have run better for me if I'd taken a little more stock in Injun training and not reckoned western smartness so low down."

"You're right, old man, we don't set out to know everything out West, but we've got a few 'points' for fellows up this way like you."

"Yes; you've pointed me down well; I wish I'd been raised West!"

"You might have been an honest man if it had been your luck to have been raised west of St. Louis."

"There's one thing that I want to say, Jack."

"Sing out your tenor."

"I had no grudge against you."

"No, I am not giving you credit for a grudge."

"I like you, lad."

"Thank you."

The Gypsy Detective enjoyed the conversation and would like to have listened to more of it, but he was not a man to waste time.

"Seeley, are you going to make things long?" he asked.

"When Tremaine's got his nippers on me it's no use kicking!"

"That's a sensible view to take of it."

"I thought I was smart, but I see I'm too fond of a joke. I thought it a good thing to guy that boy from the West."

"So did I," quietly answered Jack.

Dick Seeley was taken to the Tombs, and on the following day Phil Tremaine had an interview with the district attorney. Later on the city counsel visited the Tombs, and after an interview with Seeley prepared the necessary papers and took proceedings to have the young man from the West fully cleared and exonerated.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHEN all the legal formalities were settled and Jack was declared a free man, the news was announced to him, and he was correspondingly delighted.

The Gypsy Detective and our hero were seated in the former's apartment on the day following the formal release of Jack, when the latter said:

"I do not know, sir, how I can ever repay your kindness to me."

"Would you like to repay it?"

"Yes; and I will some day."

Jack spoke in a very earnest manner.

"You will some day, eh?"

"Yes, I will."

"How?"

The detective spoke in his peculiar quizzing tone.

"I do not know now; but I think some day I will be able to repay all your kindness."

"You can pay me very easily, Jack; but tell me what are your plans—will you stay here or return West?"

"I came here to settle."

"Oh, you did?"

"Yes."

"And you mean to stay?"

"I do."

"What are your plans?"

"I don't know yet, but I do not mean to hang around and enjoy your bounty."

"That's all right; but what are your plans?"

"I mean to get work."

"You've had a pretty fair education, Jack, for a fellow born and raised on the plains?"

"Yes."

"How did you secure it?"

"My mother was a Yankee woman; she had a good education, and she spent many days helping me to pick up a little learning."

"So you are going to get a job?"

"I'm going to try."

"And some day you will pay me?"

"Yes."

"You can pay me now."

"I can?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"I'll tell you. I understand you intend to remain in New York?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, sooner or later a lad of your parts will meet with success."

"Thank you, sir, I think a good deal of that commendation coming from you."

"Why from me especially?"

"Because I know you are a good and true man."

"How do you know I am?"

"I've the best reasons for knowing it."

"Well, Jack, let me tell you something. I was an orphan like yourself, and I was compelled to make my own way in the world."

"Your example is good enough for me."

"And you wish to repay me?"

"And I will."

"And now I will tell you how you can; as yet you know nothing of the temptations of a great city like New York."

"I've had a pretty lively experience, though, sir, for a short stay."

"Yes, you have."

"I suppose I've a little more to learn yet."

"Yes; you've considerable to learn; and now let me tell you plain out how you can repay me for any kindness I may have done you."

"Proceed, sir."

"I like you."

"Thank you."

"I wish to be your friend."

"Again thank you."

"I know that now you are a virtuous and honorable young man."

"I was trained to be that, sir, by my mother."

"Good; adhere to your mother's teachings under all circumstances, whether you meet success or disaster, and you will repay me for any good service I may have performed for you. Yes, Jack, remain the same honest, straightforward youth you are now, and I will always be your friend."

"I will, sir."

"Suppose you should become rich?"

"Well, sir?"

"You will encounter many temptations that do not assail you now."

"I reckon I know what you mean."

"All right; as I said, in disaster or success always maintain your integrity. I'll tell you something, and what I tell you comes of an experience such as few men have enjoyed. No young man ever came to New York and made a success unless he struck out for an honorable career and maintained his principles from first to last. I have trailed a thousand criminals in my time, and I have learned the history of most of them, and in a majority of cases they all started out with fair prospects, and only struck the downward path when they deviated from the path of honor and morality; virtue and honor are the only mottoes for a young man in a great city."

"I am really thankful to you, sir, for all you have said to me!"

"And what is your determination?"

"To preserve my honor and integrity under all circumstances."

"You will remember your promise?"

"Yes, sir."

"So far, so good; and now one word. I wish to become your adviser."

"Thank you again, sir!"

"You accept me as your adviser?"

"I do, with gladness and thanks."

"I will want a few days to think over your case."

"All right, sir."

"In the meantime do not attempt to start in on anything."

"And must I live at your expense?"

"For the present, yes; do not rebel against a good thing."

"No, sir."

"Let me do the kicking."

"All right, sir."

"And now, Jack, you have a secret from me?"

Jack turned red.

"Come, boy, what is your racket?"

"It is not exactly a secret, sir."

"Then out with it."

"I will ask you a favor, sir."

"Do so."

"Let me keep my secret until to-morrow."

"Do you think it best?"

"I think it best."

The Gypsy was a peculiar man, and he said:

"All right. I will not insist upon a revelation now, but look out that you do not run into fresh trouble."

"I will look out, sir."

"You've had some experience?"

"Yes, sir, and it shall be a 'lamp to guide my feet' in the future."

"All right, but let me into your little racket as soon as possible for your own sake."

"I will, sir."

Jack left the presence of his friend a happy lad in one sense, but very anxious withal.

As our readers will remember, the young man had gone down to ask concerning Marian Blair, and he had learned of that strange girl's singular absence from her work. An idea ran through his mind that possibly some harm had come to her. Our hero was grateful to his new friends, but their good offices did not cause him to forget the fair girl who had first come to his aid and assistance. He was determined to fathom the mystery of the girl's disappearance.

"She was good to me," he muttered, "yes, after all, as far as she was able my best friend. She was under no obligations to me when she offered me all her savings, and since then I've not seen her. I'll find her, or, as I live, I'll die in the attempt!"

CHAPTER XXX.

JACK proceeded to the establishment where Marian Blair had been employed. He entered the office and made inquiry as to her presence in the factory. The owner of the business called Jack into his private office and said:

"You are looking for Miss Blair?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is your name?"

"I do not know as it is necessary to tell my name, sir."

"What is your business with the young lady?"

"I do not wish to be impertinent, sir; but that is my business."

"It is strange that you should come here looking for Miss Blair, and be unwilling to furnish your name or reveal your business. Are you a relation?"

"I do not know as I am bound to answer that question."

"If you wish to gain any information from me you will answer all my questions."

Jack remembered that Marian had told him to say that he was a relative. It was an innocent deception and there were reasons under all the circumstances why it was excusable to permit a misconception to prevail.

"I am willing to answer your questions, sir."

"Unless you do answer my questions we can not talk further."

"What do you wish to know, sir?"

"I wish to know whether or not you are a relative of Miss Blair."

"We will say, sir, I am a relative."

A moment the owner of the shop was silent. He looked Jack all over, and when he did speak said:

"You look like an honest young man."

"I am an honest young man."

"And you are really anxious to discover the whereabouts of Marian?"

"Yes, sir."
 "So am I."
 "Sir!" ejaculated our hero.
 "I am anxious to find the girl. I tell you frankly I fear some evil has befallen her."
 Jack turned pale, and the owner of the shop observing the pallor, said:
 "There is something very mysterious about this affair."
 "Will you tell me all about it, sir?"
 "You are really a relative?"
 "I am at least a friend, sir, who would do anything to save her from harm."
 "You would do anything to save her from harm?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "Then tell me frankly, are you a relative?"
 "No, sir, I am not!"
 "Are you her betrothed?"
 "No, sir, I am not; I am simply a friend. I am under deep obligations to Miss Blair. I would do more to aid her than I would for any other living mortal!"
 "You say you are under great obligations to her?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "Will you explain how?"
 Jack hesitated, and the gentleman said:
 "Young man, I take great interest in the fate of Miss Blair. You say you are her friend; so am I, and there must be perfect confidence between you and me if we expect to unite in solving the mystery of her disappearance."
 "My name, sir, is Gameway."
 "Jack Gameway?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "You are the young man who was recently arrested for being engaged in a burglary?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "And you were honorably acquitted?"
 "Yes, sir."
 Jack proceeded and related how he had arrived in New York; told the story of his first meeting with Miss Blair; told of her noble offer to aid him by surrendering all her earnings to procure a lawyer for him. He told his story in a free, feeling, and ingenuous manner, and won the heart of the great manufacturer. When Jack had concluded the gentleman said:
 "I am glad you told be all this frankly."
 "Sir, I believe you to be a good man."
 "Thank you; I have always tried to do my duty, and to that fact I attribute my success in life. And now let me tell you, I am greatly alarmed concerning Miss Blair."
 "You think she has come to harm?"
 "I do not know what to think; but I must say she has the most regular employee in my establishment. She had charge of an important department, and I do not believe she would remain away without good cause."
 "She may be sick, sir."
 "She would send me word. She has been sick several times and I have always received a note from her."
 "Do you know where she boards?"
 "I do."
 "Have you made inquiries there?"
 "I have, and she has not been to her home for several days; indeed, she left there to come to her work, and has not been seen since."
 "Did she work that day?"
 "Yes."
 "And the disappearance occurred after she had left her work?"
 "Yes."
 "And you have heard nothing from her?"
 "I have not. I put the matter in the hands of the police, but I do not believe they have paid much attention to it."
 "I have a friend who is a detective, one of the most wonderful men in America; I will send him down to have a talk with you."
 "I wish you would. I tell you I am very anxious about the girl, and I always had the highest regard for her; indeed, I am willing to spend money to solve the mystery."
 "Do you suspect anything, sir?"
 "I do not know what to think."
 "Do you know of any enemies she had?"
 "No."
 "Have you questioned your girls as to any acquaintances she may have had?"
 "I have not as yet, but if you will send your friend the detective down here, I will talk the matter over with him; it is time that decided steps were taken in this matter."
 "I will send my friend to see you."
 "Yes, do so at once."
 "He shall come this afternoon."
 Jack returned to his temporary home, and, as

luck favored, he found the Gypsy Detective at home.
 "You told me this morning, sir, that I had a secret?"
 "Yes."
 "How did you know?"
 "I am used to reading the human face."
 "And you read the fact in my face?"
 "Yes."
 "Well, sir, my face betrayed me; and now I have come to speak out plainly."
 "I thought you would come to me."
 "I may be asking too much of you, but you know one good turn deserves another," suggested Jack, in a playful tone.
 "All right; tell me your story."
 Jack proceeded and told the story of his meeting with Marian Blair, and when he had concluded the detective said:
 "Well, how can I serve you?"
 "The girl is now in trouble."
 "The girl is in trouble?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "Eh? has she been arrested for stealing?"
 "No, sir."
 "What is the trouble?"
 "She is missing."
 "Missing?" ejaculated the detective.
 "Yes, sir."
 "Tell me all about it."
 Jack concluded his story, and the detective remarked:
 "I am glad you came to me, my lad!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

"I AM under great obligations to you, sir, already," said Jack.
 "Never mind."
 "You will serve me in this matter?"
 "Yes, I will serve you, my boy."
 "All right; and some day when I become a rich man I will pay you for all the trouble you have had."
 "So you expect to pay me?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "When you become a rich man?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "And you think you will become rich?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "How will you make your money?"
 "By hard work."
 "A good way to start in, Jack."
 "Yes, sir; I've a notion that honesty, virtue, and energy with a little brightness will go a great way with a young man in New York."
 "You're right; and as on those principles you are pretty sure to become a rich man, and as I'll take your determination as a guarantee of future payment, I will take the case in hand."
 "What is your idea about it, sir?"
 A shadow fell over the dark and still handsome face of the detective, as he said:
 "I fear it is the old, old story."
 "What is the old, old story?"
 The detective appeared reluctant to answer, but said:
 "Never mind, I can tell better after I have had an interview with Mr. Marvin."
 "I wish you would answer my question; you treat me as though I were but a boy."
 "You are but a boy."
 "But I've had some little experience in life, and some people may find out I'm quite a man within a few days. Seeley changed his idea of me mighty quick."
 "Well, I'll tell you, Jack, I fear she has loved and has been deceived—that is the old, old story."
 A terrible look shot over Jack's face, as he said:
 "If this proves true, I am converted into a relentless avenger, and it will be a sad duty to the man who ever did harm to that fair girl."
 "We will hope for the best, Jack. Until I have seen Mr. Marvin, you know, we can not tell about these affairs."
 "There is one fact, sir, that leads me to fear the worst."
 "And what is that, Jack?"
 "She promised to come again and see me."
 "And she did not come?"
 "She did not."
 "You have not seen or heard from her since the time of her visit to you in the Tombs?"
 "No, sir."
 "Would she know where to find you since your release?"
 "No, sir."
 "Is it not possible that she called at the Tombs after your release?"

"No, sir. She did not call there."
 "How do you know?"
 "I have made special inquiry."
 "All right; we will talk the matter over after I have been down to see Mr. Marvin."
 "Will you go to-day?"
 "I will go at once."
 "One more word, sir; remember, I will pay you some day for all your trouble; I will never forget the obligation."
 The detective smiled, and said:
 "That's all right, my son; I understand it. Never mention the matter again until you are rich; in the meantime, increase your obligations as fast as you please."
 The Gypsy Detective had an appointment with Gertrude Meyer, and he determined to call upon her before proceeding to investigate the case of Marian Blair.
 Upon reaching the house where he was to meet Gertrude he proceeded to her room and was arrested by hearing voices. He had an arrangement with the young lady which permitted of his honorably becoming a listener, and he did not enter the room, but proceeded to an adjoining room from where he could take quiet observations.
 The room had been arranged for the purpose, and our detective glanced into the more public apartment. Gertrude was in the room, and with her was a man of singular presence. The latter was a large-framed man, and his face expressed the smooth-tongued, cold-blooded rascal.
 There was a wicked gleam in the man's eyes as the detective caught a view of his villainous face, and at the moment he was speaking to Gertrude. He said:
 "I've the most positive proof of your guilt."
 There came a low cry of alarm, and the detective, who was, as our readers know, one of the keenest men in the business, discerned that Gertrude was playing a part; the cry of alarm was a little "guy." She had become a superb actress; and our detective passed a little signal.
 "Sir," said the lady, in a piteous tone, "why do you pursue me thus? Why should you haunt my steps? why should you seek to prove me a guilty woman?"
 The man glared in an ugly manner, and said:
 "I am not pursuing you; I am seeking to save you."
 "I do not need your aid; all I need is that you should go your way and let me go mine."
 "I must bring matters to an issue, girl."
 "Will you explain why you pursue me thus?"
 "I am not going into any explanations, and I tell you there is only one way for you to escape."
 "Escape what, sir?"
 "The consequences of your crime."
 "I have not committed a crime."
 "There is but one way for you to escape," repeated the man.
 "But I am an innocent woman."
 "You are innocent?"
 "I am innocent."
 "To save argument I will say I do not care even though you may be innocent."
 A moment's silence followed. The man glanced furtively around as though to make sure that there were no listeners.
 "Sir, this is a conspiracy!"
 "Call it what you please."
 "And you admit a conspiracy?"
 "I admit nothing, I deny nothing; I only tell you that you are in my power. You are surrounded with perils on every side. I could put you in jail, I could see you carried to your grave."
 "It is strange, sir, that you should come here to terrify an unprotected girl!"
 "It matters not who I am, I repeat there is but one way for you to escape. I am a terrible man. As I said, you are in my power and there is but one way for you to escape."
 "You should tell me who you are, sir!"
 "Bah! you have an idea as to my identity, and you have experienced an intimation of my power."
 "I can not think who you are."
 "It matters not. You are in danger; there is a way for you to escape, and you can only escape at my will."
 "And, sir, will you not tell me who you are?"
 "It matters not who I am."
 "Can it be possible?" suddenly exclaimed the lady.
 "Can what be possible?"
 "Is your name Foster?"

CHAPTER XXXII.

WHEN Gertrude pronounced the name "Foster" the visitor gave a start, and a pallor overspread his villainous face, and in a low, husky voice he asked:

"What name did you mention?"

"Foster."

"Where did you hear the name of Foster?"

The woman laughed, and said, in a sneering tone:

"The name appears familiar to you, sir."

"Where did you hear the name?"

"Well, I have heard of many men by the name of Foster, and one in particular, whom I know to be a great villain."

"You know a man named Foster who is a great villain?"

"Yes."

"What did he do?"

"He robbed two helpless orphans of their fortune."

The visitor's face turned blue as he heard the startling declaration.

"There is one question I'd like to have you answer, miss; who ever told you of a Mr. Foster?"

"It does not make any difference who told me of a Mr. Foster. There is one fact I will tell you; I have been seeking a Mr. Foster for a long time."

"You have been seeking him?"

"Yes."

"Why did you seek him?"

"He appears to have been the evil genius of my family."

"Of your family?"

"Yes."

"To what family do you belong?"

"Mr. Foster can tell you," said the girl, in a significant tone.

"And what do you know about this man Foster?"

"I am not prepared to tell you at present."

"You are not prepared to tell me?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"The time has not come, but the hour is fast approaching when all will be revealed."

"When all will be revealed?" repeated the man.

"Yes."

"What will be revealed?"

"The villainies of the man Foster."

As the girl spoke she fixed a piercing glance on her visitor.

"How did you learn all this you claim to know about Mr. Foster?"

"I will tell you how I learned all I claim to know about that man; I've had detectives on his track."

The visitor gave a start.

"You've had detectives on his track?"

"I have, and they have made the most wonderful discoveries."

"They have made the most wonderful discoveries?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who engaged these detectives?"

"I did."

"You engaged them to track Mr. Foster?"

"Yes, sir."

"What led you to engage detectives?"

"Certain discoveries that I made induced me to desire to know all about that man."

"And you made some wonderful discoveries?"

"I did."

"What did you discover?"

"I discovered that he was the man I was after."

"Why were you after him?"

"He was the villain who robbed me."

"Robbed you?"

"Yes."

"How did he rob you?"

"He is the man whom my father trusted, the man to whom my father revealed his history, the man to whom he confided his children, two helpless little girls, and I have learned how treacherously Mr. Foster betrayed the trust!"

The visitor's face was a study as he demanded:

"Who first set you to make these discoveries?"

The girl fixed her eyes upon him, and said:

"I can not tell you unless you tell me who you are. If you are Mr. Foster, I will tell you all."

"I am not Mr. Foster."

"Then I can not tell you more."

"But I know Mr. Foster."

"You know him?"

"Yes."

"And you are not Mr. Foster?"

"No."

"It's strange."

"What is strange?"

"That you should come here and threaten me and not be Mr. Foster."

The Gypsy Detective was a listener to all of the foregoing conversation, and he was amazed to discover what a clever and level-headed girl Gertrude Meyer had proved herself to be. She was leading her visitor on in the most skillful manner. In answer to Gertrude's last remark the visitor said:

"I know Mr. Foster, I tell you, and I should like to hear all that you have learned concerning him."

"I have heard of all his transactions—every one of them," came the answer.

"Some one has been making sport of you."

"How?"

"By leading you to believe that you were an heiress."

"I have not yet said that I am an heiress."

"I knew your father."

"Did you, sir?"

"Yes."

"And he was a grand, good man."

"He was a scamp!"

"Ah, you got your information from Mr. Foster; but never mind, I can wait."

"Will you sign the papers I have brought with me?"

"No, sir; I will not."

"You may be sorry; it is the last chance you may have."

"I do not fear; and then again I am acting under orders."

"You are acting under orders?"

"Yes."

"Whose orders?"

"I am acting under the orders of the detectives."

"You are, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"What are the detectives up to, I'd like to know?"

"They are on the track of Mr. Foster."

Again a pallor overspread the face of the visitor.

"What do they say they have found out?"

"They have found out who Mr. August Meyer really is; they have found out how he got his fortune, and they are weaving a web around Mr. Foster that will hang him or send him to jail for the balance of his life. And now, sir, to be plain with you, I know why you came here. You came with a lie on your lips. I expected you; I knew of this charge that was to be made against me—a lie which even you have admitted since you have been here is trumped up against me."

"You say you knew of the charge?"

"Certainly I did. I am posted concerning every move Mr. Foster and his protégé, August Meyer, may make, and I will have both men in jail soon—and possibly I may put you there also, sir!"

The man gazed aghast.

The woman laughed.

"You see," she said, "I am dropping my mask. I am not half as much alarmed as I permitted you to think. I was merely drawing you on; and, what is more, it is now time to tell you that I recognized you the moment you entered this room."

The man continued to gaze with dilating eyes. "Mr. Foster, are you prepared, you scoundrel! to do me justice—to restore to me the stolen fortune?"

The visitor still continued to gaze in silence.

"You are greatly amazed, I see. Well, sir, I could open your eyes still more if I elected to do so. Yes, I've got your record down for every act of your life since you set in to make a dupe of Philip Meyer!"

"Young lady, you are crazy!"

"No, I am not crazy. You came here to scare me; but now it's my time to scare you! I feigned fear; you are almost frightened out of your wits! And now, sir, take my advice and get away from here, or you may be caught."

"Caught?" ejaculated the man.

"Yes."

"By whom?"

"One of the detectives. I think they are about ready to close in."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE man actually trembled. Gertrude enjoyed his trepidation and said:

"Yes, sir; at last you are to be brought face to face with your crimes."

A sudden change came over the visitor, and he said:

"You do not mean what you say?"

"Yes, I do mean every word I have spoken."

"You say I am Mr. Foster?"

"Yes."

"You said you would tell Mr. Foster all you had learned?"

"I have told him all, and besides he knows of his own acts there is nothing for me to tell."

"Girl, you do not know what you are doing!"

The visitor rose from his seat and moved toward the door.

"Yes, you had better go," said Gertrude.

The man made no answer, but departed from the room, and the next moment Phil Tremaine stepped into the presence of Gertrude.

"Ah! what do you think of it?"

"That man was Foster?"

"Yes."

"Under what plea did he come here?"

"He came here representing himself as a detective, and told me horrible stories as to his power and all that he could do, and then asked me to sign some papers."

"Did you sign them?"

"No."

"Did you look at them?"

"No."

"Do you suspect their purport?"

"No."

"The man threatened you?"

"Yes."

"What did he threaten?"

"He told me I had been detected in having committed a forgery."

"I must have arrived near the beginning of the conversation?"

"Yes."

"You caught my signal, and knew I was in the other room?"

"Yes."

"Was it wise to let him know that you recognized him?"

"Yes."

"All right; we will talk about that matter later on. I came here to-day to listen to the balance of your wonderful story."

"There is but little to tell."

"I am interested in your narrative."

"I told you that I met my sister once, and she acted very strangely—did not appear at all glad to have met me, and parted from me with a promise to see me on the succeeding day; but she did not meet me—on the contrary, she left New York. I at once commenced a search to discover her, and, in the course of my investigations, became acquainted with all the members of the gang with whom she was associated."

"Your sister was really the queen of the confidence gang?"

"She was certainly associated with a gang of criminals, and she was herself a criminal, poor creature! But there is an excuse for her—yes, yes, she is not to be blamed for her career."

Here followed a return of Gertrude's deep agitation, and it was some moments before she resumed her narrative.

"In order to discover my sister I put myself in communication with several very prominent criminals, and several times came very near being arrested as the queen of the confidence gang, owing to the wonderful resemblance existing between my sister and myself—indeed, I became a fugitive, until I resolved to go under a disguise. I changed my appearance and continued my search, but without success."

"It was strange your sister should evade you."

"No, it is not strange; when we did meet the mystery was all explained, and her action went to prove that, after all, there was an underlying goodness in her character."

"She had the reputation of being a very desperate woman, one of the smartest and most adroit female criminals that ever attracted the attention of the metropolitan force!"

"And I believe she was fairly entitled to her reputation," came the tearful answer.

"Proceed with your narrative," said Tremaine.

"My experience has been exciting. Sometimes I would appear without disguise, hoping that my sister would see and recognize me, and upon these occasions I almost always got into serious trouble. One night I was walking along Broadway when I saw a handsomely dressed lady reeling along in the custody of an officer; I moved forward, the woman was veiled, but a

strange misgiving warned me that it was my sister. I boldly approached and raised her veil, and, alas! it was indeed my poor sister for whom I had been searching so many months. The officer did not appear to have recognized her as the great confidence queen, but had merely arrested her as an intoxicated woman, and I soon managed to fix him, and at last my unfortunate and lovely sister was consigned to me. I called a carriage and we were driven to my home."

"Here?"
"No, I have an elegantly appointed house of my own up-town; this place is merely my business office."

"Proceed."
"When I reached my home I led my sister into the house. She was indeed helplessly drunk, or as I afterward discovered, 'drugged.'"

"I put her to bed and set myself to watch over her, and it was far into the succeeding day ere she awoke fully recovered from her stupor, and when she saw me sitting beside her she burst into tears and reviled me, and it was a long time before I could quiet her. At length I succeeded, and after she had taken refreshments I asked her to tell me why she had avoided me, her only living relative and loving sister."

"'You are pure,' she said, 'and I am glad, I am a wretch and unworthy to live in your sight.'"

"'My dear sister,' I said, 'I love you, and you shall turn from your evil ways and become good and pure.'"

"'Never!' she answered.
"But I will love you, and you shall love me. I am rich; there is no need for you to sin more."

"'You do not know all,' she murmured."

"'I know enough, and I care not what your past has been, you shall from this time out live with me virtuous and happy.'"

"'Never!' she answered, in a despairing tone. 'But tell me your history,' she added."

"I proceeded and told her the story of my life from the time we were parted in the public institution. When I had concluded, she moaned: 'Oh, that the good man had taken us both! Would that we had never been separated!'"

"'It matters not, dear; we are together now, and death alone shall separate us.'"

"'No, no; I can not stay with you! I must go away!'"

"'Will you deliberately go back to your wicked life?'"

"'I must go back to him.'"
"To whom?" I demanded.

"'Do not ask me. But I can not stay with you; and when I go away, we part forever. We must never meet again on earth. But, ah! how like we are to each other!' she suddenly ejaculated."

"'Yes, we are indeed sisters, and you must— you shall remain with me!'"

"'No, no; I can not!'"
"Why not, my dear?"

"'It is useless to talk to me; I shall go away. I can not—no, no, I can not stay with you!'"

"'And do you not love me?'"
"Yes."

"'I will divide my fortune with you.'"

"A strange light suddenly shone in my sister's eyes, and after a moment she said: 'You will divide your fortune with me?'"

"'Yes.'"
"How rich are you?"

"I told her.
"And you will divide with me?"

"'Yes.'"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A MOMENT the narrator stopped and silence prevailed, while the tears flowed down the lovely cheeks of Gertrude. The detective at length said:

"I am sorry to urge you to recall all these sad memories."

"No, no, it matters not. She is at rest now, yes, she is at rest now; but hers was indeed a sad fate."

"Sad, indeed, and it is a pity you could not have prevailed upon her to remain with you."

"I think now it is for the best that she is dead. She was of a highly sensitive nature, and she would never have been happy; the memory of her previous life would always have shadowed her existence."

"What did she say when you offered to share your fortune with her?"

"She said in an eager tone: 'And I shall have it in my own right!'"

"I answered: 'Yes, if you so desire it and will promise to remain always with me.'"

"A moment she appeared lost in thought, and at length she exclaimed: 'No, no, I will not do it! I will not take your money! I would only deceive you, and he would soon get it all away from me and waste it! No, no, it can not be!'"

"Who is the man of whom you speak?" I demanded.

"Do not ask; I can not tell."

"Is he your husband?" I asked.

"Husband! Ah, sister!" she moaned, "I can not tell you; I can only say I am mad! I am mad! and I am lost!"

"Tell me your story?" I said.

"Oh! it is a sad tale; it is better that you should not hear it!"

"Yes, tell it me," I said.

"It was very unfortunate that the man who took me from the asylum was a villain; it was my face won him to take me, and he trained me to become a thief. Yes, sister, I am a regularly educated thief!"

"Where is the man who took you away from the asylum?"

"He is dead."

"How did he die?"

"My sister at the question shot a look at me that sent a thrill of horror to my very soul."

"Do not ask me," she said.

"Yes, tell me."

"You will know?"

"Yes, I will know."

"He was murdered!"

"Murdered?" I ejaculated, as a cold chill shot through my heart.

"Yes, murdered, I say; and my lovely sister laughed like a beautiful demon."

"Who murdered him?"

"And you will make me tell you that?"

"Yes."

"I murdered him! murdered him in cold blood! I planned his murder for weeks, and when the opportunity arrived I killed him, and I am glad of it; he was a devil!"

"Oh, sir!" moaned Gertrude, "you can imagine my feelings when I heard this terrible confession! It appeared, as I learned from my sister, that the man who adopted her was, as she had said, a villain. He was a criminal, and he educated my sister to become a criminal, and when she was but a mere child he committed against her the greatest of wrongs, and made her a criminal, and at the last commenced to ill-treat and abuse her, and it was then she killed him; and if there is such a thing as killing in self-defense, her case is an example."

"And could you not persuade your sister to remain with you?"

"No; but I was determined to keep her with me, and I had made up my mind to abduct her out of New York, and if necessary put her in an asylum; but, alas! she was too smart for me—managed to escape just as all my plans were completed, and I did not see her again."

"Then you did see her again?"

"Yes; when she was dying she sent for me and then I learned why she would not live with me."

"I can already guess," said the detective.

"Possibly, yes; and now you remember a number of weeks ago when we had that terrible storm, when some poor, ignorant people were said to believe that the world had come to an end?"

"Yes, I recollect it well."

"On that terrible night my sister died."

"She died a natural death?"

"No; she was murdered. I had commenced a second search for her. I was still determined to rescue her, but could not find her, and the night of the storm I was at my home when a messenger brought me a note; the missive was from my sister."

Gertrude could not continue her narrative for some minutes; her agitation was extreme. Phil Tremaine, however, waited patiently for her emotion to subside when she resumed. She said:

"The note, as I told you, was from my sister. It informed me that she was dying, and bid me hasten to her with the messenger. The latter was a woman, and in the storm I started to go to my sister. I was led to the meanest part of the city, to a tenement neighborhood, and in a miserable apartment lying upon the bare floor I found my dying sister."

Again Gertrude stopped, but resuming quickly, said:

"It was a terrible sight, and I thought my heart would break, and when I entered she exclaimed: 'I am glad you have come.'"

"Are you sick?" I asked.

"No; but I am dying."

"Dying! And you are not sick?"

"Listen to me: do not talk of sending for a doctor. He can do nothing for me now, and it would only involve you in a scandal and advertise your relationship to me."

"My sister," I asked, "have you been murdered?"

"No."

"And yet you are dying?"

"Yes."

"Explain the mystery."

"I would have killed her, but she killed me. I have been poisoned."

"Who did this?"

"Never mind; she only gave me the draught I had prepared for her."

"Let me send for a doctor?"

"A doctor has been here. I arranged for that, and he will give the certificate of my death; but all the doctors on earth can not save my life. Listen to me now; I have but a few moments to live. I know the workings of the drug too well. Yes, yes, I have used it on others."

"Oh, sister!" I exclaimed.

"Hush!" she said; "do not give way now. I tell you I have been a wicked woman, and now the end has come!"

"I spoke to her of her soul, but she bade me hush, and said, in a mysterious tone, 'I have arranged all that.'"

"She then made some strange and startling revelations, which it is not necessary I should repeat, and when she had concluded I once more bade her let me talk to her of her soul; but, alas! I was talking to deaf ears, and her lips were sealed never again to form a word in this life. She had died as quietly, after all, as an infant, and I was alone in the world—indeed, without one living relative!"

Again Gertrude gave way to her emotion, and it was the detective who said:

"Under all the circumstances, you should feel glad that your sister is dead."

"I can not regret her death, since it was impossible to draw her from her evil life. It appears, as I learned after my sister's death, that she had become enamored of a noted criminal. Despite her beauty, the man cared little for her; but she loved him to madness, and no other influence could control her. She had a successful rival. My sister sought to kill her, and met her own death. I had her body embalmed and buried in the tomb in Greenwood, where you gazed upon her rigid face; and now I have told you all."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE detective had listened to many harrowing tales, but never to a sadder one than the history of the queen of the confidence men, and his sympathies were all alive in favor of the surviving sister.

After a moment, he said:

"Why have you remained in New York since your sister's death?"

"I have been seeking the woman who killed my sister."

"Do you know who she is?"

"No."

"Then how can you find her?"

"I had hoped that she would mistake me for her victim, and that is why I have gone abroad and run all the chances of being arrested as the queen of the confidence men; and it was thus that I was arrested in the vestibule of the theater on the night young Gameway effected my rescue. The sergeant who arrested me really believed me to be the great female criminal."

"Why do you seek your sister's assassin?"

"You will not bring her to justice, or seek to avenge your sister's death?"

"I shall do neither."

"Then why do you seek her?"

"She holds certain papers belonging to my sister."

"Are the papers valuable?"

"To me, yes."

"You run great risks."

"I know it; but, after all, I am an innocent woman, and, when worst comes to worst, I can prove my identity—I have provided for that."

"You say you have never seen the woman?"

"Never."

"Do you know any one who has seen her?"

"Yes."

"Are you in ready communication with the party?"

"Yes."

"Good; then you must leave the matter to me; I can find a person on a description far better than you can."

"I am willing to leave it to you."

"Good; and now let us talk about this man Foster. He is a bad fellow, and he must be compelled to disgorge. I think we've got the 'wood' on him."

"Yes; we can bring him to terms."

"But we must be very careful, the man is a dangerous schemer."

"I know it, but I have prepared a surprise for him."

"What surprise have you prepared for him?"

"I have sent for the man who furnished me all the information concerning Foster."

"The old man lives?"

"Yes."

"You are sure?"

"Yes; I heard from him only a few days ago."

"This is a good scheme; we will have Mr. Foster all right, but still it is necessary that you should be very careful."

"Whom must I fear?"

"Foster; that man left here with a scheme in his head."

"What scheme could he have?"

"Well, we must find out; I've got the fellow sized down. I've got his 'mug,' and I'll lay on his trail and investigate."

"You think he left here with a scheme in his mind?"

"Yes, and it is lucky I was present and overheard the interview, or smart as you are that man would beat you."

"Never."

"Yes, because you are a woman. He is a desperate character; the chances against him now are terrible, and he will stop at nothing. He is a bad man!"

"I know he is a bad man."

"This sending for old Gruber is a good scheme."

"Yes, and let me tell you I have all the other proofs against this man Foster."

"What proofs have you?"

"I can prove that he was the man who put my sister and myself in the asylum, and all I need now is to find the woman who murdered my sister."

"Why do you need to find her?"

"She robbed my sister of an ivory miniature of my father, and she now has it in her possession."

"How comes it that your sister chanced to be in possession of such a souvenir?"

"Mr. Foster, when he put us in the asylum, gave our little box of clothes to the manageress, and among our goods was found the miniature, and when my sister was adopted out the matron placed the miniature around her neck."

"We will find that woman and recover the trinket," said the Gypsy.

"Yes, it will prove invaluable to us as evidence in case Foster should attempt to make a fight."

"He will not attempt to make a fight, I reckon, after I get ready to go for him; and now tell me, can you find the woman who led you to your sister on the night of the latter's death?"

"Yes."

"Has she ever seen the murderess?"

"She will not admit that she ever has seen her."

"I have a good way of bringing out admissions, and I will interview this woman; the miniature shall be found. And now, one word: Do you wish me to aid you in this matter?"

"I do."

"Then you must act under my advice."

"I will."

"Strictly?"

"Yes."

"Then do not make a move until you hear from me. Do not seek to find the woman who has the miniature—do not seek to find the man Foster."

"I promise."

"Go to your private home."

"I will."

"Will you give me your address?"

"Come with me to my home."

"When?"

"Now."

"I will."

The detective passed from the room and secured a cab, and in a few moments proceeded

with Gertrude to her home. He was charmed with what he saw and learned; and, as it proved later on, it was a fortunate incident, his visit to the home of the strange, wonderful woman whose career had been such a succession of romantic events.

Phil glanced around and said:

"You have indeed an elegant home."

"Yes."

"Was it here you brought your sister?"

"Yes."

"And was it from here she escaped?"

"Yes."

"Gertrude," said the detective, "I have had large experience as a detective, but I must say that never in all my career did I come upon a stranger life history, and it is also remarkable that Jack Gameway should have been the youth to rescue you."

"Yes; it is strange."

"We must have a long talk about that young man."

"Where is he?"

"Under my care."

"I am glad."

The detective remained only a few moments at Gertrude's home; he had a purpose in his visit, and a short stay served his purpose.

From the home of his friend he proceeded to the shop where the girl Marian Blair had been employed, and entering the office he was introduced to the proprietor. The latter led the detective into a private room, and when seated said:

"You are a detective?"

"I am."

"A regular officer?"

"I am."

"Your name is—"

"Phil Tremaine."

"The famous Gypsy?"

"I am called the Gypsy Detective by my companions."

"I am glad you are interested in this case. I have heard of you, and I believe a great crime has been committed."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"You think a great crime has been committed?" repeated the detective.

"Yes, I do, sir."

"What makes you think so?"

"Miss Blair is a very handsome girl—indeed, so pretty that, in self-defense, she has been compelled to mar her beauty. I have watched over the girl as far as I could; but I live out of town, and I have a large family of my own, including several daughters."

The detective studied the face of the proprietor of the shop, and speedily reached the conclusion that he was an honorable, high-minded gentleman.

"What have you observed lately in the conduct of your pretty employée?"

"On her own part I have not observed anything out of the way. She has always acted in a modest and proper manner; but since her disappearance I have heard a strange story."

"From whom have you heard the story?"

"From one of my other employées."

"A man or woman?"

"A young girl."

"And what did she tell you?"

"She told me that an elegantly dressed lady has loitered around the shop, just before the hour of closing, for weeks, and that she one day stopped her, and made a great many inquiries concerning Miss Blair."

"Did Miss Blair have any male friends to your knowledge?"

"I never saw her in company with a young man."

The man spoke in a hesitating tone.

"But did you ever hear that she had a male acquaintance?"

"I did, yes."

"Ah, now we are getting at it. Under what circumstances did she permit the acquaintance?"

"Probably you know, sir, as well as I do."

"How so?"

"You are well acquainted with the young man who appears to have been her friend."

"Do you allude to Jack Gameway?"

"Yes."

"He is the only male friend she is supposed to have had?"

"Yes, sir, as far as I can find out; and now, Mr. Tremaine, may I ask you a question?"

"Certainly."

"Do you know this Gameway well?"

"I do."

"You have perfect confidence in him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is he the missing girl's lover?"

"No, sir."

"Only a friend?"

"A friend only. And as far as you know she had no other male friend?"

"As far as I know she did not."

"You say there was an elegantly dressed lady who appeared interested in the girl?"

"Yes."

"Did you ever see the lady?"

"No, sir."

"Has she been described to you?"

"Yes, sir."

"By whom?"

"The young girl of whom the lady made the inquiries."

"Is the young girl still in your employ?"

"Yes, sir."

"She is here to-day?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is the character of the girl?"

"Good, as far as I know."

"Will you send for her?"

"I will."

Mr. Marvin left the office, but returned in a few moments, leading a modest-looking young girl.

The detective passed his observing glance over the girl, and noticing that she appeared frightened, said:

"You need not be afraid, miss."

"I am not afraid," said the girl; but her trembling voice belied her assurance.

"You were acquainted with Miss Blair?"

"Yes, sir."

"Were you very intimate with her?"

"No, sir."

"You were not intimate?"

"No, sir."

"Did she have any intimate acquaintances in the shop?"

"No, sir."

"She was about as intimate with you as with any other of the girls?"

"Yes, sir; a little more intimate with me. Indeed, she was just becoming better acquainted with me when she disappeared."

"Ah! I see. And now answer me: you saw a lady loitering around here?"

"Yes, sir."

"When did you first observe the lady?"

"About three weeks ago."

"Was she a young lady?"

"About thirty I should say."

"Did you ever see this young lady talking to Miss Blair?"

"No, sir."

"Never saw her speak to her at all?"

"No, sir."

"Did Miss Blair ever speak of the lady?"

"No, sir."

"You are sure?"

"Yes, sir."

"She never even mentioned observing the strange lady hanging around?"

"No, sir."

"The strange lady spoke to you?"

"Yes, sir."

At this moment one of the other girls entered the office and spoke to the manufacturer; the detective glanced at the girl and discontinued his questions until she had gone away.

"What did that girl want?"

"Nothing particular," answered Mr. Marvin.

"She wanted to know what was going on?"

"I think so."

"Is it generally known that Miss Blair is missing?"

"There has been talk in the shop, yes, sir."

A moment Phil was thoughtful; then turning to the girl he asked:

"Would you recognize the lady if you should see her again?"

"Yes, sir."

"You say she was elegantly dressed?"

"Yes, sir."

"Young or old?"

"About thirty, I told you, sir."

"Did she wear diamonds?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was she painted?"

"Yes, sir."

"She was altogether a very showy-looking woman?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you think her a lady?"

"She was dressed like a lady."

"Did she impress you as a real lady?"

"No, sir."

"Did she come here afoot or in a carriage?"

"She left her carriage to wait for her a block away."

"How do you know?"

"I took measures to find out."

"What measures did you take?"

"I followed her the first time she questioned me."

"Why did you follow her?"

"I was curious to know more about her."

"Did you have any suspicion?"

The girl blushed but did not answer, and the detective did not repeat the question.

"The lady came in a carriage, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"You saw the carriage?"

"Yes, sir."

"A private carriage or a hack?"

"I should say it was a private carriage."

A shadow fell over the face of the detective.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

EVIDENTLY a very disagreeable suspicion crossed the detective's mind; the shadow which fell over his handsome face was sadly suggestive. Resuming his questioning, he said:

"You think it was a private carriage?"

"Yes, sir."

"A liveried coachman?"

"Yes, sir."

"What was the style of the livery?"

"He wore a drab uniform, very showy."

"And the horses; white, brown, or black?"

"A brown and a gray."

Again a shadow passed over the detective's face.

"Was it a close coach or an open victoria?"

"It was a landau."

"Did you remark the nationality of the coachman?"

"Yes, sir; he was an Irishman."

"A large or small man; young or old?"

"Young and very tall, and quite good-looking."

"Did the lady come veiled?"

"She always came veiled."

"But she removed her veil when talking to you?"

"Yes, sir, once; unconsciously, I think."

"Did you see the lady the day Miss Blair disappeared?"

"No, sir."

"The day before?"

"Yes, sir."

"And when was it she spoke to you?"

"The last time I saw her she spoke to me."

"And when was that?"

"The day before Miss Blair disappeared."

"Had she spoken to you before?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did she say the first time?"

"Her inquiries were general."

"She spoke of Miss Blair?"

"No."

"When did she speak particularly of Miss Blair?"

"The day before Miss Blair disappeared."

"What did she ask you about Miss Blair?"

"Her name."

"Did she only ask her name?"

"No; she asked where she lived; how long she had been in the shop; where she came from, and whether or not she had any relatives or intimate friends in New York."

"What answer did you make to all these questions?"

"I did not answer at all."

"Why not?"

"I did not like her looks."

"How did you get out of answering the questions?"

"I disclaimed any knowledge of Miss Blair."

"Did you ever give her name?"

"I did not. I said I was not acquainted with the girl at all."

"You say you did not like the woman's looks?"

"I did not."

"What was there in her looks you did not like?"

"I can hardly tell; but I conceived a prejudice and a suspicion."

"What was the nature of your suspicion?"

The girl blushed, and did not answer. No answer was required. Phil Tremaine was able to judge the nature of the suspicion.

"So you evaded giving the woman any information?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did she appear to discern that you were evading her?"

"I think she did."

"Did she question any of your shopmates?"

"I do not know."

"You say her veil was raised once?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you would recognize her again were you to see her?"

"Yes, sir."

"Can you describe her appearance?"

"I think I can."

"Try."

The young lady proved herself to be very cute and observing. She furnished the detective a most complete and accurate description of the mysterious woman.

"You have not seen this woman since the disappearance?"

"No, sir."

"Now, one word more; you appear to be able to hold your tongue?"

"I can, sir."

"Your shopmates may ask you some questions."

"Yes, sir."

"They must not receive any information."

"I understand."

"Mr. Marvin has your address?"

"Yes, sir."

"You will be ready to attend me if I need your services?"

"Yes, sir."

"And now, miss, what is your name?"

"Kate Locke."

"Kate, if I need your services you shall be well paid for your time."

"I will do anything to aid in the recovery of Miss Blair without pay."

"That is all right; but I am to understand you hold yourself in readiness to answer my call?"

"Yes, sir."

"That is all; you can go."

After Kate had gone the manufacturer said:

"Well, sir, what do you think of it?"

"It has a bad look, sir."

"Ah, indeed; so I fear."

"I think I recognized the lady in the fine clothes."

"And who is she?"

"I will not speak now, not until I have inquired further."

"You never saw Miss Blair?"

"No, sir."

"She is a very handsome girl."

"So I have been led to believe. Have you a photograph of the girl?"

"I have not."

"All right; I will see what I can do, and I will call on you later; and now, sir, you must leave the whole matter to me."

"I am very glad to leave it to you."

"If any one should call here you must give no information, you must not say the case is in the hands of a detective, nor must you mention my name."

"I will not, sir."

"Good-day; I will report at the earliest moment."

The detective left the office of Mr. Marvin and strolled up Broadway. He was lost in deep thought and was revolving many possibilities in his mind. From the description he felt positive he identified the woman who had been making the inquiries, and if he was right then it became a puzzle what her interest could be in the missing girl.

The woman whom the detective suspected was the wife of a well-known gambler and sporting man. She was not known to the police as a criminal, but she had the reputation of being a very fast woman. She attended races and bet freely—"bet like a man." She lived handsomely, kept a fine turn-out, and led altogether a very gay life. She could often be seen riding in the park, generally alone, but sometimes accompanied by a gentleman who was not her husband.

"I'll see this woman," was the detective's resolve.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

PHIL knew where the woman lived, but determined to "pipe" for her just the same as though he had no knowledge of her at all, believing that in so doing he might "tumble" to some sort of a clew.

A day or two passed. He saw the woman once or twice, but no chance offered to strike a regular trail, until one day he "piped" her to Stewart's. The detective waited awhile, and then sauntered into the great dry goods palace, and after a few moments came upon the lady in

the department where ready-made apparel is sold, and at the moment the detective came upon her she was examining an elegant dress.

"Aha!" muttered Phil, as he sauntered toward her. "I reckon we were right. This looks like a little give-away."

The detective wandered off to a part of the store where an opportunity offered, and he wrought one of those lightning changes in appearance for which he was noted, when he again approached the spot where the woman was making the purchase, and arrived just in time to "catch on to a wrinkle."

The woman had critically examined the dress, and, as Phil drew near, she remarked:

"I am very particular in selecting this dress, as it is not for myself, but for a young lady who is stopping at my house."

Phil had "piped" the house, but had seen no signs of a young lady; but the remark set him to thinking over again, and he said to himself:

"I'll go closer in next time."

The woman finally purchased the dress and ordered it sent home, and the detective followed her around, and was witness to the buying of a complete outfit for a young lady; and the "things" were of the most fashionable and costly character.

It was well on toward evening when the woman, who had given her name as Mrs. Hummell, started to return to her home. The detective followed her, and lay around waiting for a chance to carry out a little scheme that had formed in his mind.

A few moments passed, and he exclaimed:

"Aha! I thought so! Here she comes!"

The remark was occasioned by the approach of a young woman toward the house the detective had under surveillance. The woman carried a large box, and was evidently a shop-girl.

Phil approached the girl, and, having changed his appearance back to his ordinary character, he touched her on the arm, and said:

"Halloo, Kate!"

The girl turned, with flashing eyes, and answered:

"My name is not Kate!"

"What is your name?"

"None of your business!—and see here, mister, you had better march off, or you will get into trouble!"

"Oh, you wouldn't get me into trouble!"

"You go 'long, now, and don't bother me!"

The detective took the girl's measure. He saw that she loved dress, as she had on plenty of cheap finery.

"See here, sis, you are no fool."

"No; I am not a fool."

"You would like to make a new dress for yourself, eh?"

"See here, I'll call the police, you insulting rascal!"

"No; you will not call the police. All I want out of you is a little information, and here's a twenty-dollar bill for your trouble."

The detective displayed a twenty-dollar note. The girl's eyes glistened.

"What do you want?"

"A little information."

"Is that all?"

"Yes."

"What do you want to know?"

"You're taking a dress home?"

"Yes, I am."

"To that house there?" and the detective pointed to Mrs. Hummell's residence.

"What number is that house?"

Phil mentioned the number; the girl glanced at a card and said:

"Yes; that's the house."

"Here is a twenty-dollar bill, sis."

"What, is the money for me?"

"Yes."

"I won't take it!"

"Why not?"

"Oh, you go off about your business!"

"You will take the money?"

"Why do you give it to me?"

"I want a little information."

The girl repeated:

"Is that all?"

"Yes."

"Well, what is it?"

"You are taking home a dress?"

"Yes."

"To that house?"

"Yes."

"Here, take the money, and I want you to answer me a few questions."

The girl took the money and the detective said:

"Now, then, are you a smart girl?"
 "I don't know."
 "You can keep your eyes about you?"
 "Yes."
 "Especially if you get another twenty-dollar bill?"
 "Ah! I see," suddenly exclaimed the girl.
 "What do you see?"
 "I know who you are?"
 "Do you?"
 "Yes."
 "Who am I?"
 "You are a detective."
 "Well, never mind whether I am or not, I've another twenty-dollar bill for you if you do what I want you."

A complete change had come over the girl's manner when satisfied in her own mind that the man was a detective.

"I'll do what you want," said the girl.
 "All right; I want you to note everything you see in that house."

"I'll do it."
 "You are to see that dress tried on?"
 "Yes."

"When you come out I want you to be able to describe the young lady to me."

"I'll do it."

"I want you to mark and remember all that is said."

"I'll do it."

"If you do as I tell you another twenty-dollar bill shall be yours when you come out."

"Tell me, are you a 'cop'?"

"Never mind."

"What's up, anyhow?"

"Never mind."

"Is it a scheme to steal the dress?"

"That is for you to find out; all I want you to do for me is what I have told you."

"You can depend upon me, sir."

"You must not mention to the lady about meeting me."

"Ah! I know better than that."

"You look like a smart girl."

"You can depend upon me."

"Mark what I say; if you play me double for a new 'stake,' it will be bad for you."

"You need not fear."

"I will make trouble for you if you go back on me."

"I know my business."

"You understand?"

"Yes."

"Once more, if you go back on me, I'll find it out."

"You need not fear, sir; I'm all right."

"Well, go ahead, and I'll wait for you."

The girl proceeded toward the house, and the detective started in for a long wait, but instead caught a surprise.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE detective had discounted the trying on and fitting of a dress, and was prepared for a long wait, but the girl came forth in a few moments and started to go up the street without waiting to speak with the officer. The latter ran after her, overtook her, and said:

"Halloo! where are you going so fast?"

"Back to the store."

"I thought you were to bring me some information?"

"Let me go on."

"But this ain't according to our agreement."

"Let me go, please."

"What does this mean?"

"It means that you must let me go on about my business."

"But you were to bring me some information."

"I've nothing to tell you."

"Ah, I see, you got a 'tip,' eh?"

"No, I didn't."

"Did you see the young lady?"

"No."

"How is that?"

"The madame took the dress from me, and let me wait in the parlor."

"What are you giving me?"

"The truth."

"Then why were you in such a hurry to get away?"

"I had nothing to tell you."

"I've got a fifty-dollar bill lying loose."

"I can not earn it."

"Why not?"

"I have told you the truth. I saw no one but Mrs. Hummell."

"That won't do."
 "It's the truth."
 "And you did not see the young lady?"
 "No."
 "How is that?"
 "I did not see her."
 "What occurred? What did Mrs. Hummell have to say?"
 "Nothing."
 "It's strange she said nothing to you."
 "She said nothing."
 "Did the dress satisfy her?"
 "I suppose so. She kept it, and did not send back any message."

The detective fixed his keen eyes upon the girl. She did not stand the gaze well, and Phil suspected something wrong.

"I'm afraid you made a mistake, sis."

"How?"

"Well, you'll learn soon enough. I think you've been a little too smart; you would have done better to stick by me."

"I do not understand what you mean."

"You understand me well enough."

"I have told you the truth."

"You did not try on the dress?"

"No, I tell you Mrs. Hummell took it from me."

"And went upstairs?"

"Yes."

"She could not have been gone long."

"She came right down."

"And sent you off?"

"Yes."

"All right; I'll take your word, but I'll find out whether you sold me out or not."

"How?"

"In less than ten minutes."

"I guess not."

"You've made a mistake. I intended to give you a hundred dollars."

The color left the girl's face, and she said:

"Oh, you can not fool me!"

"Ah, I see it all, sis. Well, all right; a gal don't have two such chances."

"I did not give you away, but you would not be able to find it out even if I had."

"I'll know in ten minutes."

"I'll swear I didn't say a word, but the lady asked me a question."

"What did she ask you?"

"She asked me if any one spoke to me."

"She did?"

"Yes."

"That will do, miss; I see through it all now."

"I told her 'No.'"

"Oh, yes; you told her 'No,' but you were in a big hurry to get away. She gave you fifty, mebbe, but I intended to give you a hundred."

"I did not say one word to the lady, and when she asked me the question, I told her no one spoke to me."

"All right; git along. You can talk now as much as you please; you are the loser."

The girl walked away, and the detective moved back toward the house. A moment he waited, and then ascended the stoop and rang the bell, and when the servant came he said:

"I want to see Mrs. Hummell."

"Will you send in your name?"

"Tell her it is a gentleman from Stewart's dry goods store."

The girl returned in a few moments and showed the detective into the parlor, and after a long wait Mrs. Hummell appeared.

"What is your business, sir?"

"You bought some clothing for a young lady to-day?"

"Well, sir?"

"Is it all satisfactory?"

"If it is not, I will in good time make my complaint."

The woman looked at the officer suspiciously.

"Can I see the young lady a moment, madame?"

"Can you see the young lady?"

"Yes."

"Why, this is a very astonishing request."

"I wish to see her, nevertheless."

"If you will explain why you wish to see her, I will consider your proposition."

"I will answer you frankly, madame; I am looking for a certain young lady."

"It is very extraordinary that you should come and tell this to me."

"Why so, madame?"

"What have I to do with any missing young lady?"

The woman spoke in a calm manner and did not betray any trepidation. The detective had spoken out frankly and abruptly, hoping to cause

the woman to betray herself by her manner, but she was perfectly cool and gave no sign.

"Madame, you have a young lady staying with you?"

"Yes."

"Then why is it strange?"

"It is strange simply because the young lady staying with me is not a *missing* young lady."

The detective was compelled to go slow; there was a possibility that he was on the wrong track, a possibility that the two young ladies were a coincidence.

"But you admit the fact that a young lady is in this house?"

"Your questions are very extraordinary, very singular."

"Never mind, madame. I repeat, there is a young lady staying with you?"

"Yes, there is a young lady staying with me."

"Do you object to my seeing her?"

"I do, certainly."

"I must see her, madame."

"You must see her?"

"Yes."

A moment the lady was silent and thoughtful; but at length she said:

"If you can give a satisfactory reason I have no objection to your seeing the young lady who is stopping with me."

"Madame, I have a confession to make."

"This is all very strange, sir. Are you sure you are not an escaped lunatic?"

"I am not a lunatic," answered the officer, with a smile.

The lady smiled and said:

"You must admit your conduct is very extraordinary?"

"Not when you know the truth, madame."

"What is the truth?"

"I came here in the way of business."

"What is your business?"

"I am a detective."

CHAPTER XL.

THE lady did not betray any surprise and our hero felt assured that the girl had indeed given him away; but he was compelled to take the chance and did not blame himself.

"You are a detective?"

"Yes."

"You sent in word that you were from Stewart's?"

"I did."

"I knew you were not from Stewart's, and I suspected that you were a detective; and it is a very impertinent thing for you to come here. You have been 'piping' me."

"Yes, madame, I confess I have been 'piping' you."

"I saw an old fellow following me around; and now, sir, as you have been so frank as to tell me who you are, I will say there is no missing young lady in my house."

"I wish to be convinced, madame."

"I do not know how you can be unless you take my word."

"I must see the lady for whom you bought the dress at Stewart's."

"If you will give me a satisfactory reason you shall see the lady, despite the fact that the demand is very impertinent. What is the name of the missing lady?"

For reasons the detective answered promptly:

"Miss Blair."

The woman smiled, but did not betray any surprise, but asked, in a commonplace tone:

"Has her disappearance been advertised?"

"No, madame."

"The young lady staying with me is not Miss Blair."

"Do you positively refuse, madame, to let me see the lady?"

"No; you shall see her."

"When?"

"Now."

Mrs. Hummell left the room, stepped to the foot of the stairs, and called:

"Nellie! Nellie! come down, please."

The detective made up his mind that for the time being he was "beat." He did not expect to see Miss Blair, and his conclusion was correct. He had never seen the girl, but had obtained her description from Jack, and the moment his eyes fell upon the young lady who entered the room, he knew that she was not the missing girl he was seeking.

He did not fix his glance on the girl, his eyes sought the face of Mrs. Hummell, and he saw a gleam in her eyes that told him a startling tale.

"Is this the young lady you seek, sir?"

"No, madame."
 "I thought so; indeed I knew it."
 "Yes, madame, I give you credit for *knowing* this is not the girl I seek."
 "It is very strange, sir, that you should come here to seek the missing girl."
 The detective rose to go.
 The look of triumph still shone in the woman's face as she accompanied him to the door, but a pallor overspread her face as the detective turned and said in a meaning tone:
 "Madame, beware! Let no harm come to Miss Blair, or it will go hard with you."
 "I know nothing of Miss Blair."
 "Then pay no heed to my warning, and you need not take it to heart; still, I repeat, beware that no harm comes to Miss Blair."

Without a word more, the detective left the house.

While Tremaine was following the clues leading to the unraveling of the mystery of the disappearance of Marian Blair, he neglected calling upon Gertrude Meyers. He had arranged with the girl to communicate with him at once, if anything occurred, and, as he had not heard from her, he concluded that everything was all right.

Jack, meantime, was becoming very restless. Each day he had inquired of the Gypsy as to his success, and the detective had given very unsatisfactory answers.

Phil Tremaine, as our old-time readers know, was a very reticent man, and, like all detectives, was averse to giving information until his purpose was accomplished.

Jack had asked permission to try a little detective work on his own account; but his friend had said:

"No, Jack; you just leave this matter to me."

"How shall I put in the time?"
 "New York is a big city; go around and amuse yourself."

The detective had furnished Jack with considerable money. Our hero had hesitated about taking it, but Tremaine had managed to carry his point; and having nothing else to do, Jack wandered around, and, indeed, found plenty of amusement; but all the time one thought was running through his mind, and Marian Blair was the subject of his cogitations.

Jack had visited all the museums and some of the theaters, and to him all was new and novel and fascinating.

One day—indeed the very day when Tremaine was running up the game on Mrs. Hummell—Jack took a stroll in Central Park, and he was sauntering along in one of the side paths when he encountered a scene which in the end led to a thrilling and very startling adventure. He came upon a handsome-faced girl talking to a gentleman, and as he approached he heard the girl say:

"Help me, or I will throw myself into the lake! I am starving!"

Jack was deeply interested and sat down upon a bench, and, without pretending to do so, watched the scene.

"You are starving?" said the man, a trim, nice, gentlemanly looking fellow.

"I am starving!" came the answer.

"How is that?"
 "I have a sick father at home. I have been unable to work, and all our money has been spent. Our landlord has a bill of sale of our furniture, and now threatens to turn us into the street!"

The man appeared to think a moment, and then said:

"If I could believe your story I'd help you."

"You can believe my story; do I look like an impostor?"

"No, you do not look like an impostor!"

The girl turned about and approached our hero and said:

"Will you help me, sir?"

The young man would willingly have done so, but Tremaine had warned him to be very careful.

The young man to whom the woman had first appealed, approached, and addressing Jack, said:

"What do you think of it? do you think the woman is an impostor?"

"Gentlemen," said the woman, "if I were asking for myself alone I'd go and throw myself into the lake before I'd accept a cent from a living soul!"

"I rather think the woman is honest," said the young man.

Jack remained silent. He had made up his mind to help the poor creature, and, as it turned

out, was to learn in the end the full force of the detective's warning.

"You say you owe for your rent?" said the young man.

"Yes."

"And you have no food in the house?"

"Not a crumb of bread!"

"Well, here, girl, I'll take your word that you are not a fraud, and here's something to help."

Jack Gameway was treated to a most wonderful surprise.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE stranger drew forth a well-filled pocket-book, and counting out twenty ten-dollar bills handed the money to the girl. The latter fell upon her knees and expressed her thanks while the tears streamed down her cheeks.

Jack was deeply impressed; it was the most bountiful bestowal of alms he had ever witnessed.

The giver of the money said as he assisted the girl to rise:

"There, there, that's all right; go along now, I am satisfied you are a needy person, and you are welcome to the money."

The girl rose and yielding to the generous man's commands slowly walked away.

Jack's heart opened wide to the man who had been so generous, and he said:

"You are a good-hearted man."

The stranger laughed carelessly and said:

"Oh, that amount is nothing to me. I only wanted to make sure that the girl was honest and really needed the money."

"I reckon there is no doubt about her honesty," said Jack.

"No; I'm satisfied. You see, I'm a stranger in New York."

"So am I," said Jack.

"You are a stranger?"

"Yes."

"Where are you from?"

"Out West."

"Well, so am I. My name is Tom Freeling. What's your name?"

"My name is Jack Gameway," answered our hero.

"Never heard of your name," said Freeling.

"And I never heard your name," said Jack, "but I think you're a good fellow!"

"That's my idea about you; we're well met, hang it! I'm glad to meet some one from the Rockies!"

As we have said, the stranger's generous gift to the begging woman had opened Jack's heart wide; the stranger had struck him in the right spot for a warm liking, as our hero was a sympathetic fellow and the very soul of generosity.

Jack Gameway was a shrewd fellow, but the very shrewdest men are liable at times to be imposed upon, and despite our young hero's shrewdness he lacked experience, and was thus open to imposition.

The two walked on together and both appeared delighted, and they were; but the sources of their delight were different.

"You must have plenty of money?" said Jack.

"Oh, yes; it comes easy and goes easy."

"What is your business?"

"I ain't in any business; my father left me a fortune, and I just go in for fun and I have plenty of it."

"You can't afford to be as generous every time as you were to that girl?"

"No, but I took that for a real case of need; but come, let's go down-town, I've had enough of the park for one trip."

Jack was agreeable, and the two men went down-town, and the young man led Jack to an office, where he said he wished to call on a friend.

Our young hero was all unsuspecting, and proceeded with the young man to a dingy office in the upper part of a large building, and was introduced to a man whose appearance did not strike Jack favorably.

Freeling and his friend appeared to be very familiar, and, at length, the latter said:

"When do you return West?"

"To-morrow, I reckon."

"Then you'll want some 'stuff'?"

"Yes."

"I've a daisy lot in hand, just made."

Jack did not tumble, and sat there innocent as a lamb, and the owner of the office went out a moment, when Freeling turned to the young man from the West, and said:

"Jack, I'm going to let you into a secret."

"Thank you," answered our hero.

"You saw me, give a couple of hundred to the gal?"

"Yes."

"I'll let you into the racket that will explain how I can afford to be so generous."

A suspicion at length dawned across Jack's mind. His friend's whole manner had changed; his language was different; he used slang phrases, and altogether appeared, as stated, entirely different. As the suspicion came to Jack a shudder ran through his frame; his heart sunk, and he made up his mind to excuse himself in time and get away—indeed, he dreaded his new-found friend's exposure; he preferred to think of him as he had taken him to his confidence on first impressions.

"I reckon I'll go," said Jack.

"Why, what's the matter?"

"I feel tired."

"Nonsense, boy! I'm going to do you a kindness."

"I'm much obliged."

"You're not going away from me?"

Jack's good impressions were fast fading away, and he began to recognize that his quondam friend was, after all, a cold-blooded swindler. As this conviction forced itself upon our hero's mind, a complete change came over him. He began to perceive that, after all, he was being "played" for what is commonly called a "sucker." His pride was touched, and other considerations entered his mind. The young man from the West was a brave, daring chap, and he remembered that his best friend was a detective, and he thought that he might pick up a few points.

Quick as lightning all these thoughts passed through his mind, and he resolved to enter into the racket, appear to be "played," while in reality he meant to play the players. He did not drop his mask at once, but, in fact, assumed a more innocent and confiding demeanor.

"What do you want me to stay for?" asked Jack.

"I'm going to let you into a secret."

"What secret?"

"Are you rich?"

"No."

"Are you in business?"

"No."

"Well, I'll let you into a business. See here."

The young man exhibited a big pile of greenbacks.

Jack's eyes glistened, and so did the schemer's eyes glisten, for he saw that his bait was taking.

"You'd like to make money, Jack?"

"Yes."

"You'd like to be able to help a poor girl once in awhile, old boy?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm going to let you into the racket."

"So I can make money?"

"Yes."

"Make it honestly?"

"Why, to be sure."

"Well, I'm in to make money."

"Certainly you are," said the vulture, and his eyes danced.

CHAPTER XLII.

"I'm coming a game over this man who keeps the office," said Freeling.

"I thought he was your friend?"

"So he is."

"Then why do you want to come a game over him?"

"I'll tell you; there are only a few men in his secret, and he don't want any more let in, but I like you and I'm going to let you in!"

"Thank you," said Jack.

"You see," said Freeling, "this man has a friend who is a great engraver, and they have made some bills so perfect that they are taken at the banks, and it will be a number of years before the trick is discovered!"

"Counterfeits!" ejaculated Jack.

"Hush, boy, don't speak so loud; look here, are those counterfeits?"

Freeling handed Jack a number of twenty-dollar bills.

Jack looked at them in real wonder, for he believed they were counterfeits, not because he was an expert, but because of the circumstances under which they were shown to him.

"Are those counterfeits?"

"I don't know."

"You ought to know."

"They look like good bills."

"Well, they are good; good enough for the banks to take, and you can have them exchanged anywhere."

"But it is against the law!"

"The law be hanged! there's no risk!"

"No risk?" repeated Jack.

"None whatever. I've land and houses out West worth a hundred thousand dollars, all bought with this money."

"Why do you let me into this game?"

"Because I like you, Jack."

"I'm much obliged. Do you give this money away?"

"No; this man who keeps this office sells it. For every dollar of good money he gives you three dollars of this."

"But ain't this good money?"

"Good enough."

Jack was doubtful a moment, and his friend said:

"Do you want to buy some, Jack, and get rich?"

"I don't know."

"How much money have you?"

"About a hundred dollars."

"You've got a hundred with you?"

"Yes."

"Is that all?"

"Yes."

"Well, Jack, I like you."

"Thank you."

"I'll go in with you."

"How?"

"We'll buy some of this money together."

"But I do not care to get rid of all my good money."

"The money we get is just as good. You'll get three hundred for your hundred."

"That's making money fast."

"You can go and work off the three hundred and come back and buy nine hundred dollars' worth. I started on ten dollars, and now I'm worth over two hundred thousand in good money. I'll put up a hundred with you."

A shadow fell over Jack's face and he became very thoughtful. He hardly knew how to act. He wished to see the thing through; but, as stated, did not know just how to act.

"Come, old man, will you go in with me?"

"How do you work?"

"We give the man our money, and he puts the other money in a satchel, and when we get ready to go we take the satchel and walk off just like business men."

"That is easy enough," said Jack.

"Yes, easy as lighting a tallow candle."

Jack formed his plan. He did not see through the whole scheme; but he was bright enough to know that if he got hold of the satchel of counterfeit money he could take it to his friend Tremaine and become a dead open and shut witness against the rascals.

One thing struck him forcibly; the wonderfully ingenious manner in which the fellow Freeling had played the game to win his confidence. Jack was satisfied that the charity scene was all part of the game; satisfied that the pleasant-faced girl was a decoy for the gang; her tale a lie; her sorrow assumed, and the whole incident a cunning trick.

"I don't know," said Jack, "but I'd like to make a little money; but I'm afraid it ain't honest."

"See here, Jack, you saw the good I did to-day?"

"Yes."

"Didn't I help that poor girl?"

"Yes."

"We don't rob any poor people."

"You don't?"

"No; it's the government that loses, and I guess Uncle Sam can stand the loss of a few dollars."

"Hang it! I'd like to make a few dollars."

"Well, get out your money."

"I think I've a hundred."

"I'll put five hundred to your hundred, and let it all go in one satchel."

"No; not that way."

"Why not?"

"I'd rather have my money separate."

The schemer shot a glance at Jack; but the young man from the West looked as innocent as a complaisant Chinaman.

"You can have it that way if you like."

"That would suit me better."

"All right; when my friend comes in I'll make the bargain for you. Maybe I can get four hundred for your hundred."

The friend opportunely entered the office.

"Jerry, my friend would like to buy a little of the 'stuff.'"

Jerry put on a worried look and said:

"I ain't selling to strangers."

"But this is a friend of mine!"

"But he is not a regular customer."

"He may become a regular customer."

"I don't like to do it."

"Oh, yes, to oblige me!"

Jerry looked Jack all over and said:

"Are you all right?"

"Oh, I don't care whether you sell it to me or not."

"I kinder like your looks."

"Thank you."

"And I like to help honest young fellows along."

"Thank you," said Jack.

"How much would you want?"

"I've only a hundred dollars."

"Let me see, that would be three hundred."

"Make it four hundred for a beginner, Jerry," put in Freeling.

"No, I can't afford to give more than three hundred, and I guess I'll let your friend in to oblige you."

"Thank you, Jerry."

"Where's your money, young man?"

Jack pulled out a hundred dollars, money the Gypsy had let him have for reasons which will be explained.

The man counted over Jack's money, and our hero's heart swelled with strange emotions.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"THERE'S just a hundred here," said Jerry, and he put the money in his vest pocket.

Jack did not tremble outwardly, but in his heart he was quite shaky—not from fear, but anticipation. His anger was aroused. He saw that he had got into the den where many a poor stranger was robbed and ruined, or started out on the road of crime and to ruin, and he was resolved to break the game.

The more he thought the matter over, the more vividly he realized the treachery and deep villainy of the scheme; and he was really rejoiced at the prospect of becoming the instrument through which such a pest hole would be broken up. The two men he looked upon as devils, especially the smooth-tongued Freeling, who could talk like such a saint while carrying a heart like a serpent. Indeed, he was convinced that his whilom friend was a cold-blooded, relentless scamp, a villain of the most cunning and heartless type.

"I'll fix these scoundrels!" was Jack's mental comment as he saw his hundred dollars disappear in the vest pocket of the man Jerry.

The latter put the money away and smiled grimly, but did not offer to give back the equivalent.

Jack waited patiently, and at length said:

"Where is my money?"

"Oh, that's all right; but I must ask you a few questions."

"Why didn't you ask me the questions before you took my money?"

"Time enough," answered the man, coldly.

"Look here, don't you attempt to come any foxy games on me."

The man rolled up his eyes, and said:

"Eh? what do you mean?"

"Just what I say."

"Be careful, young man, don't attempt to talk sassy in here or I'll put you out."

Jack changed his tone. He feared he would lose the evidence he was seeking to get, and he said:

"I do not wish to be sassy."

"That's all right."

"We're letting you into a good thing."

"Thank you."

"But we must be sure that you are all right."

"But am I to get nothing for my money?"

"Well, we'll see."

"You will give me my money back?"

"We'll see. Now look here, where do you come from?"

"New Mexico."

"How long have you been in New York?"

"Only a few weeks."

"Have you any relatives in New York?"

Jack was cunning, and said:

"I've made acquaintances."

"Who are they?"

"A couple of females."

"Ah, I see. Well, what brought you to New York?"

"I came here to make a living."

"Well, now, see here, I'm willing to let you into this game on one condition; you must start back for New Mexico."

"I must?"

"Yes."

"But I do not wish to return."

"You must, or you can't have the 'queer.'"

"Then give me my hundred back."

"No, sir."

"On what grounds do you keep my money?"

"We've let you into the scheme and it's your initiation fee."

Jack was learning fast, and he resolved to play the foxy game himself.

"See here, I'll do what you desire."

"Aha! now you talk just right, and I want you to leave town just as soon as you get the money; and you must not open the satchel until you are miles away."

"But I've given you all my money. I can't leave town without using some of the money I get from you."

"Well, let me see, I'll just run out a moment and see if I can not get you a ticket."

Jack saw that the game was to steal his hundred dollars. The fellow meant to go out, and that would be the last of him. The young man from the West began to grow a little squeamish. Matters looked bad; he would be done out of his money, and wouldn't have the "queer" to show.

"Hold on!" he said; and he planted himself before the door. "You've got my hundred dollars!"

"Eh?—what do you mean?"

Jack began to perceive how nicely he had been caught. There was no evidence of guilt on the part of the two schemers; both would swear to the same statement, and Jack was taken in and done for; but he did not mean to be, if he could help it. He would never dare face the Gypsy after such a game had been played on him.

"Give me my money back," said Jack.

"What money?"

"The hundred dollars I gave you."

Jack felt cheap enough, and he was getting real mad. He saw that he had not played his own game well, even after he had tumbled to the scheme. He saw that he ought to have held on to his hundred until the "queer," which he was to use as evidence, was placed in his hands; as it was, he had been very simple.

"Did you ever hear such crazy talk as this?" said Jerry, appealing to Tom Freeling.

The latter let go his mask.

"I never did!" he said.

"Are you a pair of schemers?" demanded Jack.

"Why, young man, you are insulting!" said Jerry.

"All right, give me back my hundred and I'll clear out."

"Look here, bub, do you want to go to jail?"

"Go to jail!" ejaculated Jack.

"Yes, go to jail."

"I reckon I won't go to jail."

Jerry laughed and said:

"How innocent you are!"

"Not so innocent as you think."

"No, no, I see you are not; now look here, boy, I'm going to be very kind to you, because you're not the kind of fish I'm after."

Jack stared.

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, you haven't tumbled."

"Yes, I've tumbled to your 'racket,' and I do not mean to be swindled."

"You're a swindler yourself."

"Am I?"

"Yes; you have been trying to buy counterfeit money. I'm a detective."

CHAPTER XLIV.

JACK turned deathly pale. He was in another scrape seemingly, and equally serious as the one from which he had just escaped, and indeed a worse scrape, as, technically, he was a guilty man. He had really agreed to purchase counterfeit money. His purpose was all right, but that he could not prove, and his heart sunk within him.

The two schemers saw how their "point" had taken; they enjoyed Jack's evident discomfiture and laughed heartily.

"You see, young man, I've got you dead to rights."

"You are a detective?"

"Yes, and I've got the 'wood' on you, and no mistake, and I've a witness; but, see here, you're not the fellow I want, and I'm going to let you off."

"You are going to let me off?"

"Yes; I'll tell you, I ought to arrest you, as

were it not for fellows like you, these sharps couldn't play their game. You fellows who buy the 'stuff' are as bad as the men who make and sell it."

"You're right there," said Jack, reflectively. "I think you are a green hand, but I mean to let you go."

Jack tumbled back again. He perceived that the fellow was letting him go too easily, and he made up his mind that the detective scheme was only another dodge for getting away nicely with his hundred dollars.

"You will let me go?" he asked.

"Yes, I will, this time."

"That's all right. I'm much obliged, Jerry, but I do not mean to let you go with my hundred dollars."

The two schemers permitted a more serious expression to return to their faces.

"Look here, young fellow, if you talk that way I'll take you to jail."

"All right, I'm ready to go."

"Hang it, you're a fool!"

"No, I ain't a fool—not fool enough to let you get away with that money!"

"What money?"

"The hundred dollars I gave you."

"You didn't give me a hundred dollars?"

"I didn't."

"No, sir."

"Well, I see you fellows have dropped your masks; now look here; don't have any trouble; just hand me back my money."

"What money?"

"The hundred dollars I gave you."

"I tell you, young man, you're crazy; you didn't give me any hundred dollars."

"Yes, I did."

"Tom, did this man give me any money?"

"I didn't see him give you any money."

"You are a nice 'pill,'" said Jack, fixing a look of contempt upon his whilom friend.

"I thought you were a gentleman," said Freeling, with the brassiest "cheek" imaginable.

"And I thought you were one; but now understand, I see through your whole game."

"What game, young fellow?"

"No use to waste words; hand me back my money."

"I've no money belonging to you, and now I want you to stand aside."

"You fellows do not know who you're dealing with."

"I reckon we do," said Jerry. "And now will you stand aside?"

"No, I will not until you give me my money."

"You mean to make trouble?"

"I mean to have my money."

"No one has any of your money, and I tell you to leave this office."

"Give me my money, and I will 'quit.'"

Jerry went down in his pocket and drew a revolver, and cocking it deliberately, said:

"Will you get out of that door?"

Jack went down in his clothes and drew a knife—a formidable-looking weapon with which he had settled many a grizzly.

The two men turned pale; they had thought to frighten the young man from the West, but it suddenly dawned upon them that he did not "scare for a cent."

An awkward silence followed, broken at length by Jack, who said:

"You may as well give me that money."

"I have no money of yours."

Jack made one step forward, with his knife held firmly in his hand.

The villain recoiled.

"Why don't you shoot?" said Jack.

"Fellow, you're crazy! I'll call for the police."

"I thought you were a policeman yourself—a detective?"

The man made no answer.

Jack laid his knife on the palm of his hand.

The villain trembled.

"What are you going to do?" he asked.

"I'm going to have my money, or drive this knife clean through you. I've stuck many a grizzly, and I reckon I can down you."

"You are a ruffian! This is a scheme to rob me of a hundred dollars!"

"That's all right; but I don't mean to be robbed of a hundred myself, so shell out, or here goes!"

Jack drew his hand back, when Freeling made a spring to seize his arm; but Jack let his foot go out, and Freeling received a kick in the pit of the stomach that doubled him up on the floor,

as though he were suddenly taken with a violent cramp.

"Hold!" cried Jerry.

"Give me my money."

"Give it to him!" moaned Freeling.

"Aha! you've come to your senses, have you?" said Jack.

Jerry appeared still reluctant to surrender the money, when Jack said:

"Old man, I'll give you just seven seconds to hand over that money, or I'll send this knife clean through."

"Give him the money?" moaned Freeling.

"Yes, give him the money!" echoed Jack.

The man put his hand in his vest-pocket and drew forth the roll of bills.

"Yes, that's my money; hand it over."

"Put up your knife."

"No, no, John; you do not play me again. My knife stays ready until the money is in my hands."

"You shall have your money."

"Hand it over!"

The man advanced and extended the money toward Jack; and, as the latter reached forward to get it, Jerry made a stroke with his pistol to knock the knife out of Jack's hand. But the youth was prepared, and once more that terrible foot came into play and Jerry was doubled up on the floor.

"You would have it!" said Jack; but he had seized the money as he kicked.

"Now, then, gentlemen, I will bid you good-day," said Jack, "and next time show more sense in getting your man."

Jack walked out of the office, and as he did so a cunning scheme entered his head.

CHAPTER XLV.

JACK and the detective met at their lodgings. "Well, Jack," said Phil Tremaine, "how have you passed the day?"

"I came pretty near being 'beat' to-day."

"Aha, you have been experimenting?"

"I ran into the adventure unaware."

"Where's your hundred?"

"I've got it all right."

"Ah, you did not run in on some skimmers then?"

"That is just what I did do."

"Let's hear about it."

Jack proceeded and related his adventure, and when he had concluded the detective said:

"Well, Jack, you're a gamey fellow!"

"I was thinking I was a fool."

"No, you played a pretty good game."

"I was working to get hold of some of the 'stuff,' as the fellow called it."

"It's the saw-dust game; you struck the panel racket, but as you had only a small amount of money and handed it over, they didn't work the panel."

"I handed over my money too soon."

"Well, yes; but it would have come out all the same in the end."

"Have you made any discoveries, sir?"

"I will tell you better in the morning."

"You have a clew?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"Can't tell you anything, Jack, until morning."

Phil Tremaine had his ideas and he meant to follow the clew he had been working. He had not been thrown off. He was too old and experienced an officer to be cast down by the expedient that he was satisfied had been "played" on him.

That same night at an early hour he returned to the vicinity of Mrs. Hummell's house, and he had been on the watch but a little while when he saw a man walking down the street studying the numbers of the different houses. At once a suspicion flashed through his mind and he started to meet the man, and the two came face to face just opposite a street-lamp, and the detective recognized the stranger as an Englishman—a shrewd-faced man.

Phil Tremaine passed on up the street a short distance and then turned just in time to see the Englishman ascend the stoop of Mrs. Hummell's house.

"Well, I'll be shot," was his ejaculation, "if I don't believe I've struck upon another of those wonderful mystery cases."

Few men would have reached the detective's suspicion on so slight a foundation, but the latter was a man whose mind traveled over possibilities like an American yacht over a rough sea before a forty-mile wind.

Phil Tremaine had heard Marian Blair's history, and a certain little discovery had caused him to anticipate a certain possibility. He returned down the street and passed the Hummell house just as the Englishman was admitted.

The detective, as our old-time readers well know, was a daring man, and it never took him long to decide upon his course of action.

He descended to the basement door and rang the bell. The door was opened by a servant. Quick as thought the officer clapped a saturated handkerchief to the girl's mouth and nostrils after having asked her just one question, so as to catch the tones of her voice, and as quickly a gag was fixed in her mouth. She was handcuffed and bound and placed in the little vault under the front stoop.

The whole operation did not occupy over one minute until the detective stepped in the house and closed the door after him, and at the same moment a voice called down the kitchen stairs:

"Katie, who's there?"

"Only a beggar, ma'am," ascended the answer.

The detective was a wonderful mimic, and it would have taken the girl herself to have detected the fraud, so perfect was the vocal imitation.

There came no other questions from upstairs, and the detective stealthily made a tour of the kitchen, and reached the conclusion that Katie was the only servant at home that night.

Phil Tremaine removed his boots, and with stealthy steps, ascended the kitchen stairs. He listened and heard voices in the front parlor. A moment he waited, and then, with a cat-like step, stole into the rear parlor and took up a position from where he could overhear all that was going on.

There was a dim light in the front parlor, but none in the back room, and, as the detective mentally expressed it, everything was lovely for a "pipe."

"Madame, I received your note," said the visitor.

The detective congratulated himself that he had arrived in time to overhear the opening conversation.

"Well, sir, I will proceed direct to the point of my business."

"Please, as my time is limited."

"You must make up your mind, sir, to give me all the time I need, for I have a surprise for you."

"What can it be?"

"Can you not guess?"

"I can not."

"You are an Englishman."

"That is no secret, madame."

"You came to America with a purpose."

The Englishman uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"You came to America, as I said, with a purpose. Sir, I know the purpose of your visit to America."

"Will you name it?"

"Yes. You came here to find a young lady, the granddaughter of a man who left a large fortune."

An oath escaped the Englishman's lips, and he said:

"This is most extraordinary."

"Am I right?" demanded Mrs. Hummell.

"I'm right," mentally exclaimed the secreted detective.

We will here say that Phil Tremaine was at a loss all the time to fathom the motive that had induced the well-dressed lady to kidnap Marian Blair, and in lieu of any other motive he had been forced to a terrible conclusion; but light was let in on the motive and he congratulated himself upon having the truth, and his heart beat more freely. He began to see through the whole game.

"Yes, it is extraordinary, but true," said Mrs. Hummell.

"May I ask, madame, from whom you received your information?"

"It matters not, sir."

"Madame, I'll give you twenty pounds if you will tell me if there is another party here on the same business?"

"Sir, you insult me!"

"How?"

"By offering me money."

"Excuse me, madame; but you do not know; this is most extraordinary. Will you tell me is there any one watching me, any one from England?"

"First tell me, am I right?"

"Well, I've admitted that, madame."

"You are looking for a girl; now, then, will

you tell me all the circumstances attending your search for her?"

"Madame, I can tell you nothing."

"Oh, yes, you will tell me all!" came the assurance.

CHAPTER XLVI.

"MADAME, you appear to know so much of my business, possibly you can tell me the name of the young lady whom I seek?"

"Marian Blair."

The Englishman leaped from his seat and again ejaculated:

"This is most extraordinary."

The detective ventured to peep around the door casings and he saw the smile of triumph on the woman's face. Well, there was also a smile of triumph on his own face.

"Madame, you know the name of the girl, you possibly know where she can be found?"

"I do."

"This is most extraordinary!"

"Yes, it is most extraordinary!" repeated the woman, "but it is true. I know where to find the girl."

"Madame, will you please let me know how you ascertained all these facts?"

"No, sir."

"What is it you propose?"

"You wish to find the girl?"

"Yes."

"You wish to get possession of her?"

"I wish to communicate with her."

"No, sir, you wish to get possession of her!"

"I do not understand you, madame; I tell you I wish to communicate with her."

"No, sir, you have conceived a plan to rob her of her fortune."

The visitor turned deathly pale and remained silent.

"You see, sir, I know your game clear through."

"Madame, are you a fiend incarnate?"

"No, I am only a smart woman."

"Yes, you are smart; but how on earth did you learn all you are revealing to me?"

"That is my secret. It is sufficient that I know your game."

While the detective listened, our hero made up his mind to give the woman a bigger surprise than she was giving her visitor.

"You want possession of Marian Blair," said Mrs. Hummell.

"How do you know, madame?"

"You must come right down, sir, and talk business, or you might as well say good-night and go."

"What is your proposition, madame?"

"How much money will you pay for the surrender of the young lady into your charge?"

"Can you surrender her, madame?"

"I can."

"When?"

"As soon as we come to terms."

"Madame, I think my course is plain."

"Do you?"

"What is your course?"

"An appeal to the police."

The woman laughed and answered:

"You will never appeal to the police."

"You appear very assured, madame, as to my course."

The Englishman was assuming a very lofty tone.

"Listen to me, Mr. Leverich; if your purpose had been honest, you would not have proceeded in such a secret and underhand manner to learn of the identity and whereabouts of Marian Blair! Now, then, let us understand each other. I will see you to the door, and you shall make an appeal to the police, and I will know how to act."

"How will you act, madame?"

"I will make an appeal also."

"To the law?"

"No."

"Where?"

"To the English Consul General in New York. I reckon he is the proper one to whom to surrender the girl when it comes to an appeal to the law."

Again the visitor's face paled.

"I am up to your game, sir. I know you through and through, and you can not act without my aid."

"Madame, am I to understand that you seek a bribe?"

"Yes."

"What is your price?"

"Name what you are willing to pay."

"A hundred pounds, madame."

The woman laughed in a jeering manner.

"How much money do you expect, madame?"

"Five thousand pounds!"

"Five thousand pounds, madame?" repeated the visitor—"twenty-five thousand dollars American money?"

"That is just the sum I demand."

"Madame, make it one thousand pounds, and it is a bargain."

"One thousand pounds would not pay me."

"And the sum at stake, madame, will not warrant the payment of five thousand pounds."

"I fear we can not deal."

"What will you do, madame?"

"Take the girl to England."

"Take her to England?"

"Yes."

"And then what will you do?"

"A woman who has trailed you so well will not be long in finding out the truth."

The Englishman was silent a few moments, but, at length, in a low, husky voice, he said:

"Madame, a genuine certificate of the girl's death would be worth five thousand pounds!"

"You must attend to that part of the business; I will merely surrender the girl to you."

"When?"

"As soon as the money is paid!"

"Madame, I will pay you one thousand pounds to-night in money, and give you a draft for one thousand more, and I assure you I am paying a large sum, considering what I am to make out of the affair, and the risks are great!"

"Make it one thousand five hundred cash, and a draft for one thousand five hundred and I will agree!"

"I will make it one thousand cash and a draft for one thousand five hundred!"

"A city draft?"

"Yes, madame."

"And to-morrow you will stop it?"

"You know better, madame!"

"How do I know better?"

"If the draft was not paid you could expose me."

"That is true."

"You will be perfectly safe."

"I will accept your terms."

"How will the girl be delivered to me?"

"As you desire."

"One word, madame; what assurance have I that you will surrender Marian Blair?"

"You have her photograph."

"Well, well!" exclaimed the Englishman, "this is indeed most extraordinary."

CHAPTER XLVII.

"You have the photograph?" repeated the woman.

"Yes, I have the photograph."

"And you are sure that the original of that photograph is the person you seek—the daughter of Henry Blair and Augusta Seney, the daughter of Archibald Seney, a native of London?"

"Madame, this is indeed extraordinary, the most marvelous incident of my life!"

"But it is all true?"

"Yes, it is all true."

"Then you will know whether or not the young lady is the one you seek?"

"I will at a glance."

"Now, sir, when she is surrendered, what are your plans?"

"Has the young lady any friends in New York?"

"I did not think she had, but I have learned to-day that one of the most expert detectives in America is searching for the missing girl."

"The missing girl, madame?"

"Yes; she is missing from her usual haunts."

"Will you tell me about her?"

"You know her story; she came from S—; she obtained work in New York, and has behaved herself in a becoming and worthy manner."

"She is handsome, madame?"

"A very handsome girl, indeed."

A strange look came over the Englishman's face.

"You might marry her," said the woman.

Again the visitor exclaimed:

"This is most extraordinary!"

"Now, sir, let me tell you that you must kidnap the girl."

"Madame, how can I manage it?"

"You must pretend to be a detective, present an order of arrest, and pretend to take her to

S—, but in reality take her to Canada, and in the meantime arrange your plans."

The woman fixed a meaning glance upon the man.

"What charge can I make against her?"

"Claim that the parties who adopted her made a charge of theft against her, and for her own sake offer to take her back secretly, and assure her the charge amounts to nothing and that you will see that she is cleared."

"A most excellent scheme, madame, and shall we carry it out to-night?"

"Certainly, if you have the money."

"I will go and get the money."

"All right, and return with a carriage."

"I can depend upon you, madame?"

"You can depend upon me."

The visitor left the house and the detective stole down the stairs to the kitchen. He went to the vault and whispered in the ear of his prisoner:

"My poor girl, it's all right; you need have no fear. In a short time you will be released."

The girl could not move or make answer, and the detective re-entered the house.

As he afterward learned, fortune favored him at the time; the cook, the woman whom he had served so roughly, was the only servant in the house, the waitress was sick and off on leave of absence.

An hour passed, and it was just half past ten o'clock when a carriage drove up to the door.

Meantime the detective had resumed his position, and while the Englishman was away some startling developments occurred. Mrs. Hummell entered the parlor, followed by Marian Blair. The detective secured a glimpse of the girl, and his heart bounded; but one thing astonished him—the girl appeared to be a voluntary lodger in the house. Later on the mystery was explained.

"Marian," said Mrs. Hummell, "under all the circumstances, as your friend, I have decided to remove you from New York. It is most strange, this persistent determination on the part of your enemies, to get you into trouble."

"Madame, you have indeed been my friend, and I shall always feel grateful; but I do not know why I should be hunted in this manner as a criminal—I, who never committed a wrong knowingly in my life."

"It will all be right in a few weeks, my dear. I am pushing my investigations, and it is lucky I discovered you, or who knows what might have happened?"

The mystery of the girl's voluntary stay in that house was partially explained; the detective saw that she had been tricked by some foul tale.

The conversation was in progress when, as stated, a carriage rolled up to the door, and with a look of simulated terror Mrs. Hummell exclaimed:

"Who can that be?"

Marian Blair also turned pale.

There came a ring at the door-bell, and Mrs. Hummell said:

"I will open the door myself."

The Englishman entered the hall, and, in a loud tone, said:

"You have a young lady here named Marian Blair?"

Mrs. Hummell uttered a little scream and appeared to faint. She fell back upon a lounge.

Marian ran to her side, and said:

"Madame, do not fear; let worst come to worst, I am innocent."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Englishman, "you are Marian Blair?"

"That is my name, sir."

"I am sorry, miss, but I must do my duty."

"What is your duty, sir?"

"I have a warrant for the arrest of Marian Blair."

"On what charge, sir?"

"Theft."

"I am innocent."

"I am satisfied, miss, that you are innocent; but the warrant must be served, and you must answer to the charge."

"I am ready and willing, sir."

Mrs. Hummell had recovered.

"This must not be!" she exclaimed, rushing toward Marian and casting her arms about the girl.

"Madame, do not fear; I am innocent."

"I will go with you, my child."

"Madame, you are very kind."

"Officer, can I not give bail?" asked the woman.

"No; I am not permitted to accept bail."

"And can you not wait until to-morrow to serve your warrant?"

"No. I have been two weeks searching for Miss Blair."

"But you can leave her with me until morning? I will be responsible for her custody."

"I can not leave her, madame."

The woman whispered to Marian:

"Step into the back room, child, I will see if I can not persuade the officer to leave you here until morning at least."

The girl stepped into the back parlor, and the detective was compelled to cower very low to escape detection.

The woman advanced to the Englishman and said:

"Have you the money?"

"Yes."

"Give it to me."

The man passed over a roll of bills.

The woman had stepped into the hall. She looked over the money—thousand-dollar bills.

"Have you the draft?"

"Yes; here it is."

The woman stepped into the parlor and called:

"Marian!"

The girl returned.

"I can not persuade the cruel man to let you remain here until to-morrow."

At this moment the detective stepped into the room and said:

"I will see what I can do to persuade the cruel man."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

If a bomb had exploded in that room its report could not have occasioned greater consternation. Mrs. Hummell screamed and fell fainting upon a sofa. Marian Blair also uttered a cry of amazement and the Englishman glared.

"You did not expect me here at this critical moment, madame," said the detective, fixing his calm glance on the woman.

The latter had tried to faint outright, but, alas! the faint wouldn't come. The woman made no reply, but if ever a face expressed disappointment and rage her countenance did.

Turning to the young girl, Marian Blair, the detective said:

"Miss, you need not fear, I am your friend; there is no warrant for your arrest, but there is a conspiracy against you, and I am here to defeat that conspiracy."

"Sir, I do not understand."

"You will, miss, when I tell you that the story told you by this woman is false, her whole tale was a lie."

"Who are you, sir?"

Marian Blair was perfectly cool and calm.

"I am employed by Mr. Marvin to find you. I must call your attention to the fact that you disappeared very suddenly and very mysteriously from the observation of your friends."

"And who are you, sir?"

"That I will explain later on; Mrs. Hummell knows who I am; and now, sir," continued the detective, addressing the Englishman, "who are you?"

"I am a friend of Mrs. Hummell."

"Oh, you are?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what is your business here to-night?"

"That is none of your business?"

"Ah, it is none of my business?"

"No, sir."

"Mrs. Hummell," said Phil, "had you not better give your friend a cue?"

"The man is not my friend."

"He is not your friend?"

"No."

"He claims to be your friend."

"He has no right to claim to be my friend."

"He came here to see you on business?"

"Yes."

"What is the nature of his business?"

"You know well enough," said the woman.

"I know well enough?"

"Yes."

"Why do you think so?"

"I know you have been here and overheard all that passed."

"Well, yes, I did overhear a little bargain between you and this gentleman, and I've a question to ask him."

"I'll answer no questions," said the Englishman.

"Oh, yes, you will."

"I will not; but if you wish to see me, call at my hotel."

The detective laughed, and the Englishman made a movement to go toward the door.

"Hold on, sir."

"I beg your pardon; you can find me at my hotel."

"Can I?"

"Yes."

"Where is your hotel?"

"Find out."

"Take it cool, sir; do not get excited."

"I have been led into a trick here, I see."

"Yes, you have been led into a trick, a bad trick, and I reckon you will lodge in the Hotel de Station-house to-night!"

"Eh?" ejaculated the Englishman.

"You are my prisoner!"

"Your prisoner?"

"Yes, sir."

"I reckon not!"

"You are my prisoner!"

"Your prisoner?"

"Yes, sir, my prisoner!"

"Are you an officer?"

"I am an officer."

"And I am your prisoner?"

"You are."

"On what charge?"

"I will make the charge soon enough, and in proper time."

"You will show your authority; I know something of American laws."

"I will show my authority."

"On what charge, I repeat, am I arrested?"

"The charge is all proper."

"Be careful what you do; I am a British subject."

"That is all right, sir; but British subjects should not break American laws."

"What law have I broken, please?"

"You say you are a British subject?"

"I am."

"You can not be a British subject and an American policeman; not even a country constable."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"The charge against you is personating an officer."

"I personated an officer?"

"Yes, sir, you personated an officer and told this young lady that you had a warrant for her arrest. If you told her the truth, produce your warrant and I will surrender the girl to you, and it will not cost you a thousand pounds either."

The Englishman stared in blank astonishment, and a look of dismay settled on his face.

"Come, sir, produce your warrant."

"I have no warrant."

"Ah, I thought you had no warrant. Now, that is the charge on which I arrest you, and then I will make another charge afterward."

"Another charge?"

"Yes, sir."

"What other charge can you make?"

"The charge of conspiracy to abduct, and it's a very serious charge, sir, under American laws."

The look of dismay deepened upon the Englishman's face, but in a moment a resolute expression succeeded.

"Have you a warrant for my arrest?"

"I do not need one."

"You shall not make me a prisoner without a warrant!"

The Englishman was a large, powerful man, and the Gypsy Detective was a comparatively small fellow; but, as our old-time readers will remember, he was a man who grew very fast when there was a scrimmage on hand.

Phil Tremaine advanced to place his hand on the man's shoulder in order to make his arrest official, when the Englishman made a terrible lunge at Phil; he had anticipated the blow and was prepared. He avoided the stroke, and letting his own iron arm shoot forth he dealt the schemer a rattler which brought him to his knees.

The man was evidently surprised in the first place. He was not a practiced athlete, and he discovered that he was pitted against a man who was.

Phil raised his arm to strike a second blow when the schemer threw up his hands in a pleading tone, when quicker than a wink he detective drew forth a pair of handcuffs and clapped them on the man's wrists.

"I reckon you are my prisoner now," said Phil.

The Hummell woman stood silent, while Marian stood and gazed aghast.

Mrs. Hummell would have left the room, but Phil called:

"Do not go, madame, or I'll put the darbies on you."

"What does this all mean?" murmured Marian.

"You will see what it all means in a few moments, miss," and addressing the manacled man the officer said:

"Now, sir, do you realize your position?"

The answer came:

"I do."

CHAPTER XLIX.

A SATISFIED smile played over the face of Phil Tremaine. He saw that he had his man dead to rights.

"You see, sir, that your scheme is a failure?"

"I do."

"I have all the facts on you; Mrs. Hummell is now my witness."

"I see it all; I have been caught by a sharp Yankee trick!"

"You have been caught, but not in the manner you suspect. And now, sir, you and I will talk business, and this whole matter can be settled right here and now."

"I am not prepared to talk now."

"I do not care whether you are prepared or not. I talk with you now or I send for the English consul; and if I send for him, the matter is out of your hands, and you will be held for punishment. And your crime is a serious one."

"If I make a clean breast of the whole business, what will you do?"

"Let you go."

"Very well, I accept your terms. That young lady is heiress to twenty-five thousand pounds in cash. It comes to her through her grandfather, who was the son of a rich London merchant. I have all the proofs of her identity, and will only ask a reimbursement of expenses, including the money I paid to that woman."

"That money will be returned, and I accept your terms."

One more mystery was explained. Mrs. Hummell had a brother, a lawyer, residing in the town where Marian was born. The brother wrote to his sister all the facts he had learned, and the sister set out to turn an honest penny by finding the heiress, to whom she told a story representing that she was wrongfully accused of a theft by the people with whom she had been placed after her parents' death. Marian knew of Mrs. Hummell by her maiden name, and was led to believe the story that was told her; and, indeed, was delighted in finding, as she supposed, so good and true a friend.

The Englishman went into a detailed account of all the facts of Marian's inheritance. He had secured all the proofs of her identity, and made it plain that the money could be secured without any trouble.

The detective insisted upon Marian accompanying him from the house of Mrs. Hummell, and on the way to the quarters he had secured for her, he went into a full explanation of all that had occurred since she had been in hiding.

When the detective reached his own quarters he had a long talk with Jack, and suddenly the young man exclaimed:

"You have found Marian?"

"Yes, I have found her."

"Where is she?"

"She starts for England in a few days."

"Starts for England?"

"Yes."

"With whom?"

"Some friends."

"Is she an English girl?"

"No, not exactly."

"Then why does she go there?"

"Well, her grandfather was an Englishman, and some of her father's relatives want her to go over on a visit."

"I want to see her before she goes."

"Impossible!"

"Impossible?" repeated the young man.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I can not explain now."

"And shall I never see the girl to thank her?"

"You may see her some day after she returns."

Jack said nothing, but kept up considerable thinking. The fact was, the detective had reasons of his own why he did not wish Jack to see Marian, and as he is a pretty long-headed

man we must conclude that his reasons are all right.

On the following day our detective had another interview with the Englishman, who, as intimated previously, was a lawyer. The latter, whose name was Ramsey, having been detected in his little game of grab, became quite anxious to make all the amends he could.

The Gypsy Detective, as our old-time readers will remember, had a most intimate and trustworthy friend a lawyer, and it was arranged that the detective's friend should accompany Mr. Ramsey and Marian to England, and on the third day succeeding the little adventure in the house of Mrs. Hummell, Marian sailed for England.

Meantime, Jack had been very uneasy and restless, and upon several occasions had expressed his dissatisfaction with his present mode of life.

"I will have time to attend to your case in a few days, my young friend."

"Well, make your few days short," said Jack, "or I will go back to the Rockies; I'm getting sick of living in New York doing nothing."

"It will all be right in a few days, Jack. I'm thinking over your case, and will put you in active business soon enough; so rest satisfied."

The detective had meantime been trailing a few facts in the case of the supposed queen of the confidence gang, and one night he went to the house where Gertrude resided. A carriage stood at the door.

"Well, what does this mean?" ejaculated the detective. At the same instant a dark figure glided up to his side.

"Well, Billy," said Phil, "what's up?"

"Something is up, sir."

"Who's in the house?"

"Three men."

The two detectives were some distance away from the house. Our Phil had, with his usual precaution, come to a halt in good season.

"Three men in the house, eh?"

"Yes, and a pal on the box."

"That makes four."

"Yes, sir."

"Who are the men?"

"I don't know."

"Let me see," said the Gypsy, "it won't do to enter the house from the front."

"No, sir."

"We must get in all the same."

"Yes, sir; and I can manage it."

"How?"

"I know the man who lives directly in the rear."

"Ah, that will do. How long have these men been in the house?"

"About ten minutes."

"They have just arrived, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right; we will get in there also."

The two detectives passed around the square, were permitted to pass through the house of Billy's friend, and scaling the fence gained an entrance into the house where Gertrude Meyers resided.

"I was just waiting for you when you appeared," said Billy.

"You had sent for me?"

"Yes."

"Well, it's all right."

The two men gained the rear door, which was opened by force, and upon entering the basement the first object they discovered was the servant bound hand and foot lying upon the floor. She was securely bound and gagged, and the detective determined to leave her in that condition for a reason.

The two officers removed their boots, and on tiptoe ascended the stairs and gained the second story, when the sound of voices fell upon their ears.

"Well, it's lucky we are here," whispered Phil.

"I should say so," responded Billy.

The voices were heard in the front room and the two detectives crept into the rear room, and Billy lay low while Phil stole up to the door of the first room and peeped and listened. A sight met his gaze that caused his heart to beat fast.

CHAPTER L.

GERTRUDE MEYERS stood in her room, pale and excited, and confronting her were three men, and one of them held a cocked revolver in

his hand, and another a naked knife, and the third a bludgeon.

One of the men was Mr. Foster; the other two were faces the detective had never seen before.

Foster was speaking as our hero put his ear to the key-hole.

"Now, then, let us understand each other," he said. "You will sign those papers or go with us."

"I will sign no papers," answered the girl, in a trembling voice; "and I bid you leave my house, or I will scream, be the consequences what they may."

"If you attempt to scream, we will kill you! The mere movement to scream will cost you your life. We have come here in full force, and we are prepared to carry out our undertaking."

"Then you had better proceed."

"You refuse to sign?"

"I do."

"Listen, girl; I am sorry you have been led into this fraud, but I am willing to let you escape; but you must sign the papers to do so."

"I would rather die than sign the papers!"

The man advanced close to Gertrude and said:

"A fate worse than death awaits you, and there is no escape!"

The girl's face became ghastly, but she still asserted:

"I will not sign any papers."

A moment's silence followed, broken at length by Foster, who said:

"Just one more chance."

"I will not sign."

"Officers, do your duty," said Foster.

The two men with Foster advanced toward the girl, when Phil Tremaine, with a pair of pistols in his hands, stepped into the room.

The two men came to a halt, and Foster, turning to the Gypsy, demanded:

"What are you doing here?"

"Obeying orders."

"Obeying orders from whom?"

"Well, you issued the order."

"I did?"

"Yes."

"What was my order?"

"Officers, do your duty."

The villain turned pale, but said:

"You ruffian, this is no joke!"

"No, you villain, it is no joke!"

"Who are you?"

"Don't you know me?"

"I do not."

"Probably you may know me by reputation."

"Who are you?"

"Well—but suppose you answer a few questions: What are you doing here?"

"You want to know what I am doing here?"

"Yes."

"I am arresting a fraud."

"You are, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, I am here on the same business."

Foster's face became ghastly; he began to see the writing on the wall.

"Who are you?"

"I am Phil Tremaine, the Gypsy Detective."

Foster uttered a cry of alarm.

"And you are my prisoner, Mr. Foster. Your little game, so long and so successfully played, is at an end, and you will have plenty of leisure to think over your wickedness in jail the balance of your life."

"How dare you talk to me in that tone?"

"See here, Foster, the mention of my name and my presence here assures you that your game is up; so come down. Your good friend, the false Meyer, is already in custody, and he has confessed."

Foster uttered a yell, and, drawing a knife, sprung toward the detective. Phil struck the man a blow on the head, and at the same instant Billy, his pal, ran into the room.

The two men made a dash for the door.

"Shall I drop 'em?" called Billy.

"No," answered the Gypsy, "let them go; we have all we want here."

The handcuffs had been clapped on Foster.

"Mister Man, the jig is up; I've got all the points on you!"

The prisoner remained silent.

"You wanted this lady to sign some papers; now I've some for you to sign."

Foster was all broken up. He sat silent, and with a fearfully woe-begone expression on his face.

"Will you sign?"

"Will you let me go?"

"No."

"Will you give me six hours' start if I sign?"

"No."

"Will you give me one hour?"

The detective was thoughtful for a moment, and said:

"Yes."

"I'll sign."

A regular notary was summoned and Foster signed a full confession which the detective had carried all prepared, and then he was permitted to depart.

The next day young Meyers was captured, and he caved in when he saw the signed confession of Foster.

Our narrative draws toward a close. Some weeks later Gertrude established her rights in the courts, and came into possession of all her property; indeed, the man Meyer made a legal transfer of all in his possession, and the courts transferred in regular form all the property that showed in the name of the man Foster.

Three weeks later Jack Gamework was placed in a large mercantile house, and ere two years passed Jack became quite a good and useful clerk.

One evening the young man found a note on his table at his boarding-house. The note was from the Gypsy Detective, who had been absent in Europe for three months.

The young man hastened to the detective's house, and when shown into the parlor was greeted by a handsome young lady.

"Why, Marian!" exclaimed Jack.

"Yes, I am Marian, and I have just returned from England to thank you for your efforts in my behalf two years ago."

"Why, hang it, I have been waiting two years to thank you!"

Jack spent a pleasant evening, and at a late hour returned to his lodgings.

The next day he met the detective.

"Come up to the house," said Phil.

"No, I will not come."

"Why not?"

"Marian is there."

"Well, that's the reason I want you to come."

"No, I will not come."

"Why not?"

"She is a rich woman, I am a poor young man; I've no call there."

"Oh, come along! don't make a fool of yourself!"

Jack did go, and he got to going pretty regular; and, at length, matters progressed so far that the young man one day sent for Phil.

"Well, what do you want?"

"I'm going to leave New York," said Jack.

"You are?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

Jack confessed, and our readers can well guess what his confession was.

"Jack," said the detective, with a merry laugh, "you're all right, but you're making this confession to the wrong person."

"To whom shall I confess but you, my friend?"

"Confess to Marian; she has a right to the confession."

"Never!"

"Why not?"

"I am a poor man."

Phil Tremaine had a long talk with Jack, and that same night Jack confessed to the right person, and Marian received his confession with delight. And confession being the order of the day, she made a confession also; and our readers can well guess the nature of both confessions.

And now a few words more. Phil Tremaine had established Jack's right to the money left by Gertrude's adopted father, but he determined not to let Jack know anything about it until he had proved him worthy to inherit it; and in the talk he had with Jack he told him all; and our hero was not a poor young man when he proposed to Marian. She thought he was, however, and did not learn her mistake until after the marriage.

Reader, our tale is ended, and we will only add, there are rumors concerning Phil Tremaine and Gerty Meyers, whether true or not we will not say. It depends whether or not Phil can ever forget a heart-history of years ago; and as our incidents are of recent date, time—a brief time—must solve the question.

THE END.